

I, Petrus Romanus, the Triumph of Goodness recounts a prophetic vocation at the heart of the twenty-first century. Through living theology, mystical experience, cultural analysis and autobiographical testimony, Hugo Noël Santander Ferreira articulates an integral vision of human destiny, in which history, spirit and moral responsibility converge along a single axis.

On 1 June 2011, in Chennai (Madras, India), the author is anointed judge of the living and the dead by virtue of his fidelity to the precepts of Jesus over forty years. Ten years later, in 2022, the Holy Spirit reveals to him his identity as Petrus Romanus, the apostle reincarnated and spokesperson of Christ, called to discern, judge and reconcile an era marked by spiritual imbalance, the idolatry of power and the confusion of meaning.

The book moves across continents and eras: India, Europe, the Americas and Central Asia; encounters with the poor, artists, rulers, criminals and spiritual teachers; prophetic dreams, episodes of inexplicable protection, discreet miracles, catastrophes suffered by his persecutors—including kings and popes—and moral judgements that reveal a universal law of equilibrium. Jesus appears here as a living teacher, the Holy Spirit as a source of wisdom, and the author's prophetic voice as philosophical and persuasive.

I, Petrus Romanus, the Triumph of Goodness examines money, fame, politics, psychology, art and religion as forces that shape civilisations. It proposes a spiritual reading of the present, in which every intention of the heart participates in the architecture of the world. The book culminates in a concrete ecumenical vision: a global theological centre in which religions, languages and cultures engage in dialogue from their essence rather than through imposition.

I, Petrus Romanus

Hugo Noël Santander
Ferreira



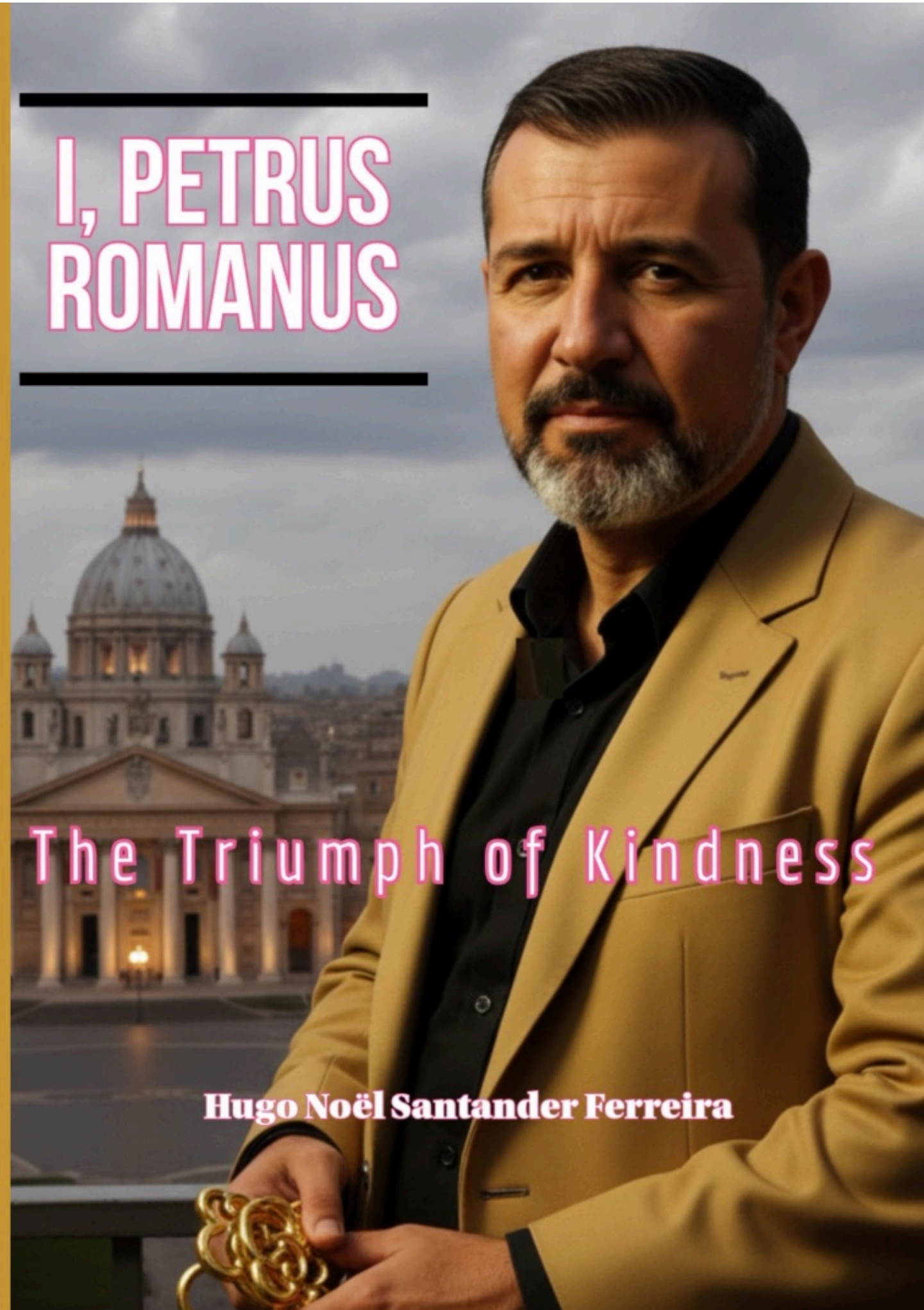
Hugo Noël Santander Ferreira, born in Bucaramanga, Colombia, is a writer, filmmaker, and cultural scholar whose work spans literature, cinema, and philosophy. He studied Social Communication at Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, completed postgraduate studies in screenwriting at Universidad del Rosario, and earned an MFA in Film and Media Arts from Temple University in the United States.

He is the author of numerous books across fiction, essays, poetry, and theatre, with many titles published in Spanish and English. His work has reached an international readership through academic journals, cultural media, and global platforms such as Amazon. As a filmmaker, he has written and directed feature films and documentaries, including *Hamlet Unbound* and *Manatí: Portrait of a Third-World Happy Town*.

I, PETRUS ROMANUS

The Triumph of Kindness

Hugo Noël Santander Ferreira





*I, Petrus Romanus*_____

_____ *Hugo Noël Santander Ferreira*

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I, Petrus Romanus

The Triumph of Kindness

*I, Petrus Romanus*_____



Editors E-Book and paper book
Bucaramanga, Santander
Hugo Noël Santander Ferreira © 2025

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ISBN: 9798279347377
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_____ *Hugo Noël Santander Ferreira*

*She knows that, on the last day of judgment, the Word, my Son, when He
comes, will not come as a poor little one, as when He was born (...) He will give to
each one what they deserve. In the wretched condemned, His presence will produce
such torment and terror that no tongue will be able to describe it. In the just, it will
produce reverential fear, together with great joy.*

Saint Catherine of Siena

*I shall be all,
For my soul is infinite;
And I shall never die, for I am all.*

Juan Ramón Jiménez



Index

Index 7

Prologue. Petrus Romanus, the Prophet Who Controls the Plagues of
the 21st Century 11

Author’s Prologue: The Being Who Chose to Be God 15

1. He who does good receives blessings; he who does evil brings
disaster. 17

2. The Gift of Healing the Sick 26

Money 26

Fame 28

Power 33

Song Eighteenth - Why Did I Choose You? You Ask.....37

3. Jesus’ call to India, nest of prophets.....39

My Arrival in India.....41

Envy that Travels.....42

The Voice.....43

4. “The Loot. Dead bird flies aloft”, a metaphor for my death and
resurrection 46

5. The Gift of the Holy Spirit: Wisdom 55

Of Learned Ignorance.....62

Divine Protection.....66

Second Mystical Experience: Our Lady of Fátima.....66

Atheism as a Secular Creed 69

The First Attack: Dividing My Family.....69

In Persecutione Extrema – After the Storm.....70

Arrival in India, 2011.....71

The Gift of the Holy Spirit: Wisdom.....72

6. My struggle against the Antichrist 75

Bucaramanga, the Misfits’ Club.....75

The Javeriana and the Stage.....76

Philadelphia and Hamlet Unbound.....77

Portugal, England, Kyrgyzstan, Bucaramanga.....77

The Numerologist and Meditation.....79

The Mark of the Beast.....80

Loki and the Law of Fire 82

Money, Generosity and the Closing of a Cycle 84

Thomas, Niraj and Generosity in India 85

Joseph, the Pastor, and the Joy of Solitude.....85

The Visa Odyssey and the Virgin of the Miraculous Medal.....86

The Voice of Jesus 90

7. Jesus anoints me as prophet, with the power to judge 94

The Stairway of Clouds: A Geometric Revelation 98

The Voice of the Lord and the Certainty of Immortality.....98

The Recounting of the Intentions of the Heart.....100

The Forges of Toledo and the Destiny of My Books 103

The Prophetic Option and the Destiny of Peter the Roman 104

The Scene of Lucrecia de León: Mass at El Escorial.....105

The Gift of Seeing and the Age of the Holy Spirit.....106

God as Substance.....108

Continual Protection and the Prophetic Mission.....111

8. Under Heaven’s Protection 114

9. Might They Have Been Hallucinations? 122

10. The Poet Who Pacified the Wrath of God 135

Echoes of 11 September.....137

The Earthquake of 11 April 141

My Mother’s Heart.....144

Hymns to Jesus: The Diseases Will Come 148

Engineers of Heaven and New Tools 148

Grandfather Bergrana and the Betrayal of a Generation 149

The Deflected Cyclone and the Judgement on Pondicherry 152

11. Truth and Goodness Make Us Free..... 154

The Kingdom of Heaven on Earth 156

INTERVIEW: The Poet Who Speaks from the Fissure.....167

12. Being a Christian under a Pope who does not believe in God
172

From theological Arianism to practical Arianism.....173

Witchcraft and power: from Europe to Colombia.....175

The Astrologer: the confession of the defeated 176

Psychological colonisation: behaviourism, determinism, and clerical
elites 180

The Black Pope, Francis I – The Condemnations of Petrus Romanus .182

Journalists, scandals, and the idolatry of genius.....184

The market of fame: advertising as literary canon 185

Auguries, seers, and Faust's trap 186

Intuition, spiritual world, and discernment.....186

Art as indoctrination 188

The Third World War was fought in mid-March 2023 191

Science fiction and apocryphal prophecies that will come to pass 193

13. Miracles and angels impress a sceptical or unbelieving world
only faintly 198

The miracle is magic, and its formula is love 200

The lady, the pandemic, and luck.....201

“And why does God not speak to me?”.....206

Encounters with angels.....207

Angels and what the world calls UFOs.....208

Invisible angels.....211

14. Criminals Suffer Punishment When They Attack the Righteous
213

A Journey Through Seven Nations and One Pattern of Guardianship 214

When You Are Good-Hearted, Heaven Protects You.....215

Colombia: The Confused Gang and the Boy with the Tiple 218

Portugal: Porto, the Ilhas, and the Miracle of Calm.....219

Harrods: the Door of Work and the Discipline of the Writer.....221

The Miracle of the Scholarship and the Car in Philadelphia.....222

Kyrgyzstan: Spinning on Ice and Inner Certainty.....223

India: Agra, the Key Without an Address, and the Miracle of
Photographs 224

Mexico: Crime & Impunity, the Library, and Providential Cancellation
.....225

Escapes in the “Bogotá Humana” 227

The Knife-Men of Palermo: The Full Sequence and the Symbolic Sign
.....229

The Invisible Beating: Cinemark, Karate, and Disappearance.....230

15. The Law of Karmic Balance 232

The Generous Shopkeeper and the Reprimanded Builder.....232

The balance between goodness and evil is universal 234

Jesus and the Demonic Temptation of the Left.....236

The Patient King 238

The Invisible Prophet.....239

Prophetic Dreams.....240

Oneiric Fallibility.....244

16. Taming Demons.....245

The Sirens of unjust fame, dirty money, and oppressive power 250

Angels and Demons contend for us.....253

The demon of Philadelphia.....255

The double demon 257

The Manítú.....260

The Attempted Attack on Hugo Noël Santander.....262

17. The Miracles of Montreal 265

I do believe in God 100%.....268

Twenty years of pain 270

The assassin who fell limp.....274

Intrigue in the Monastery 278

18. The Prophet Who Put an End to Climate Change 285

The rains of May 2023 286

The rains of March 2024 288

The Prophet of Rain Is Not Heard in Colombia.....292

The rains cover Spain in Holy Week 2024 299

19. Vanessa Cañas.....304

20. The Attack 319

21. A Prophet of the Twenty-First Century	336
<i>A Founding Father Fearful of the Germans.....</i>	<i>338</i>
22. Petrus Romanus.....	349
23. The essay that enraged Britain's rulers.....	359
<i>Jean Charles de Menezes — The Mortal Mirror.....</i>	<i>366</i>
24. The Prophetic Purpose of Fiction.....	367
<i>Towards a Mature Civilisation</i>	<i>371</i>
<i>Lennon, Luther King and Kierkegaard.....</i>	<i>374</i>
<i>We Are Immortal</i>	<i>379</i>
<i>The Ecumenical Theological Centre (ETC)</i>	<i>382</i>
<i>Three Universal Laws for the Harmony of Religions</i>	<i>384</i>
<i>Theological Ecumenic Global Centre (Global Ecumenical Theology – Centre).....</i>	<i>385</i>
<i>The Triumph of Goodness</i>	<i>387</i>
<i>I, Petrus Romanus</i>	<i>390</i>
<i>Art Reconciles Opposites.....</i>	<i>392</i>
<i>The ETC, a Religion of Being.....</i>	<i>394</i>
<i>To Be Immortal and to Be There in the Mortal</i>	<i>395</i>
<i>Spanish as Evidence: To Be and To Be There.....</i>	<i>397</i>
<i>Becoming Aware of Our Immortality</i>	<i>400</i>
<i>Prophecy Is Poetry.....</i>	<i>401</i>
<i>From the Judgement of the Suicides</i>	<i>403</i>



Prologue. Petrus Romanus, the Prophet Who Controls the Plagues of the 21st Century

Can a prophet of God endure the competitive and hypocritical spirit of the twenty-first century?

In this novel inspired by lived experience, Hugo Noël Santander Ferreira answers that question in the affirmative.

As the world approaches the year 2025, it stands upon the edge of an abyss, suspended between light and darkness, truth and deception, spiritual awakening and moral decay. In these turbulent times—when the corruption of money and power humiliates faith in goodness—, *I, Petrus Romanus: The Triumph of Kindness*, arise as a defiant testimony against the three sirens that enslave humanity: power, money, and fame.

What began as a personal chronicle of divine encounters and mystical revelations unfolds into a revolutionary guide to spiritual self-realisation, addressed not only to those who long for immortality, but also to those who dwell in the present alone, and to those who seek to unveil the hidden forces that shape our world.

At the heart of this epic stands Petrus Romanus, a prophet anointed by Jesus Christ, blessed by the Father and inspired by the Holy Ghost in the city of Madras, India. After his visions—foretelling, as early as 2012, global catastrophes such as the pandemic, the end of the climate crisis, and the spiritual decadence of modern civilisation—he becomes the target of unofficial persecutions by powerful institutions across the globe.

The Illuminati and the Freemasons influence the Vatican, which, after examining his prophecies and deeds, alerts the CIA and MI6 to the existence of a seer capable of altering the weather and calming the elements. Two Popes secretly conspire against him, fearing that his revelations may shatter the illusion of their authority and bring about the reform of economy, politics, and religion.

The conspirators turn to sorcerers and witches, who in 2023 drive Petrus Romanus into a psychiatric institution in Colombia. The

prophet appears subdued—until Nevado del Ruiz erupts, threatening the cities of Bogotá and Medellín. Petrus’s freedom is swiftly restored, and the volcano calms its fury.

Despite relentless persecution, Petrus transmits his message unbroken. Assassins and conspirators fall at his right and at his left through events that sceptics dismiss as coincidence. His vast body of work confronts the dilemmas of the honest man in a secular age and calls for justice, spiritual renewal, and the restoration of divine certainties.

His journey began decades earlier, at the age of eight, when he was declared dead for half an hour. From that moment onward, his life became marked by prophetic visions coinciding with world-shaking events. Before the fall of the Twin Towers, during the London attacks of 2005, and amid the Indian earthquake of 2012, the Creator revealed to him His disillusionment, His warnings, and His promises.

During that earthquake, through his prayers, God spared the world from destruction and entrusted him with a chilling prophecy:

‘Diseases will come.’

Published at the time on social media and ignored by mainstream media, this warning has proven uncannily accurate as the world continues to face pandemics and invisible plagues.

Petrus Romanus has not remained silent, though his interventions have thus far unfolded on a limited stage. Through social media, he proclaimed in 2024 that storms, earthquakes, and disasters afflicting humanity arise not merely from climate change, but from financial inequality and the artificial borders dividing nations. His message terrified global powers, especially when he announced that, through prayer, he would bring an end to the drought in Catalonia.

And it came to pass.

Why have they ceased their attacks?

Because after the deaths of several agents sent to destroy him, and after the downfall of world leaders who dared confront him directly, they learned that those who attempt to silence him meet mysterious ends, watching their designs collapse before forces beyond their control.

With each escape from their grasp, Petrus Romanus consolidates his role as a modern prophet—a new Moses in an age

when humanity finds itself once more enslaved by systems of control as refined as those of Pharaoh.

This book weaves fiction, biographical narrative, theology, and poetry. It plunges the reader into the dark corridors of Realpolitik, where intelligence agencies manipulate global events, and ascends into celestial realms where angels and demons contend for humanity’s destiny.

Yet amid all this, Petrus remains profoundly human. Criticised for lacking the conventional marks of modern seers—asceticism and outward modesty—he replies:

‘Jesus does not judge men by their actions, but by the intentions of their hearts.’

This principle forms the core of his teaching: an invitation to discover the gifts that only kindness bestows.

For many seers before Petrus, including Nostradamus, foretold the coming of a King of Goodness—one capable of proving that the true powers of the visible and invisible worlds arise from the abandonment of falsehood and hypocrisy, and from the embrace of truth, justice, and spiritual integrity.

*L’an mil neuf cens nonante neuf sept mois,
Du ciel viendra un grand Roi d’effraieur.
Resusciter le grand Roi d’Angolmois.
Avant apres que Mars regner par bon heur.*

*In the year nineteen hundred and ninety-nine, seven months,
From heaven will come a great and terrifying King.
To resurrect the great King of Angolmois.
Before and after, Mars shall reign by Kindness.*

Leyla Margarita Tobías Buelvas
Bucaramanga, Colombia
December 2025



Author's Prologue: The Being Who Chose to Be God

One must not seek Being beyond life itself. Being is within us: we wield it, we exercise it upon the world; it is through Being that we fashion our lives. Yet Being also dwells in our relatives, in the motorcyclist waiting to carry passers-by along the pavement, in the woman who walks by, in the pet that accompanies us at home and invites us each day to return to play as children.

Being is present in animals, and we suffer with them when we watch, in documentaries, the hardships through which they struggle to survive each day, marvelling at the many miracles that allow them to endure in such fragile environments.

Yet Being, when it incarnates in life, is also found in plants: in grassy fields, in dense forests, in majestic oaks, in pines, in the creepers that hang from irrigation channels.

Being also possesses the gift of inertia: a stone, a planet, a galaxy, a world. Such is the cosmos—the order that human beings have perceived in inert matter—that poets have aptly personified the elements, while mystics have pointed to the *manitou*, the spirit of each entity, and physicists have theorised, some, the existence of a higher Being who organises all things, called God or the Great Architect, and others, an intelligence immanent in matter, articulated through the theory of evolution.

Being, as the most ancient Dravidian traditions indicate, is an actor who wished to embody every possible role of its creation, in every possible space, in every conceivable time: from the quantum that, upon reduction, vanishes—what physicists call the collapse of the wave function—without quantum physics offering an explanation of that vanishing other than a metaphysical one, all the way to the Universe itself. This event, observed and recorded, has given rise to conjectures such as the idea that we live in parallel universes, a thesis I have already explored in my study of Zeno of Elea: we live in an infinite, yet this infinite is one among infinities. Poets, too, have recreated unknown universes through imagination: the Galactic

Empire of Darth Vader, the universe that contains the planet Dune, or the one contested through rings that encapsulate all the spiritual gifts of creation.

Being also wished to attain consciousness of itself through its creatures, from the unicellular organism that already knows how to move in order to survive, to God, its creative entity, omnipresent and super intelligent, or, as Kant defined it, the Idea of the Supreme Good.

This book tells the story of a Being who chose to love God above all things, imitating Jesus—in whom he accepted that God incarnate—and who one day encountered God, was anointed by Him, and was appointed to judge the living and the dead, receiving all His blessings.

Perhaps this is true; perhaps it is another tale like that of Aladdin and the Wonderful Lamp.

The choice between truth and fiction, between belief and disbelief, belongs to each Being, after all.

Sincelejo, Sucre, December 19th 2025



1. He who does good receives blessings; he who does evil brings disaster.

Whoever does good attains heaven; whoever does evil summons disaster. This sentence, as ancient as the written word, has accompanied us since the first marks on clay, and yet, because of the ignorance with which we coexist, it has failed to secure a stable place in the common conscience. I say there are two kinds of evil: that which arises from cruelty, and that which arises from ignorance. Only the wise can distinguish them, for whoever is immersed in evil does not discern its origin, like one who walks inside a cloud believing the entire world to be mist.

We live surrounded by those who deny good and evil as real categories, yet hurry to tell a doctor they feel unwell or praise a cook for the goodness of a soup. They are unashamed to affirm that Nietzsche lived well beside Wagner and died poorly in his madness. In practical matters—and the practical world is the true moral thermometer—everyone seeks the wellbeing of their own. They seek what is good. What is unsettling is that the very same human being who protects their own does not hesitate to harm their neighbour when the opportunity presents itself. I reflect on this often.

I was on the beach of Bocagrande, in Cartagena, at sunset. The sea advanced with a slow rumour, and the sand, still warm, retained the reddish light of the setting sun. I was speaking with Javier about the power of doing good when a small scene—and yet a decisive one—came to illustrate what we were discussing.

Javier sold me a beer, and I was counting the coins to complete the payment. A hundred-peso coin slipped from my fingers and vanished into the sand. Before us stood Nidia, a light-skinned mulatta woman with blond, curly hair, who smiled with a mischievousness that revealed more than mere playfulness.

‘You’ve lost it!’ she said, savouring another’s misfortune.

I sifted through the sand in vain. The oblique light magnified every shadow, and yet the coin seemed to have been swallowed by a tiny abyss. I stood up, about to give up, when Javier pointed to a small

eyelet in the sand, imperceptible to one who does not live by the sea. I retrieved the coin.

‘Thank you,’ I said.

He smiled with the genuine joy of one who does good without calculation.

Nidia, however, murmured in protest:



‘I was trying to help you win that coin...’

In her gesture was distilled a widespread notion: the small gain as cleverness, the loss of another as an opportunity to be celebrated. It was not great wickedness, but that ignorance which disguises itself as shrewdness.

‘Why act wrongly for so little?’ I asked her. ‘For a hundred pesos you have lost the chance to show your nobility. Javier, meanwhile, has just earned merit before the universe.’

A green-eyed woman, Cindi, had approached to listen. Javier introduced her to me. She nodded with silent understanding.

‘If you had a company,’ I asked her, ‘and needed to hire someone trustworthy, whom would you choose? Javier or Nidia?’

‘Javier,’ Cindi replied without hesitation.

Nidia rose, exasperated, as though she had been subjected to a sermon. She walked away among the shadows cast by the palms.

Javier watched her, pleased, and smiled.

‘That is why, if you see that you can harm someone, do not do it; and if you see that you can do good to someone, then do it. And I do not speak of alms, but of the dilemmas that God places before you each day. Show the Creator that you are good—or show it to yourselves—and both God and your conscience will reward you. I proclaim this certainty, which has been with us since the judgement of Solomon and the two mothers disputing the child. Was not the true mother immediately rewarded for preferring to lose her beloved son rather than see him sacrificed, as the jealous barren woman intended?’

‘What does God think of me?’ Cindi asked, her voice trembling.

‘God does not judge us by our deeds,’ I told her, ‘but by the intentions of our hearts. One may give generous alms out of vanity or out of sincere compassion; only God knows our intentions, and it is for them that He rewards or punishes us.’

‘My mother does not see it the same way,’ said Cindi. ‘I work as a companion in this country. I am from Venezuela and I send money to my mother every month, to support her and my little daughter; yet she reproaches me for my work.’

I looked at her attentively before answering, not in order to judge her, but to recognise in her words a genuine concern.

‘Your mother confuses vices,’ I said to her, ‘which theology recognises as capital sins, with the sins that truly destroy the soul. There are forms of conduct that enclose a person within vicious circles, that wear them down inwardly, yet cause no direct harm to others. These are human weaknesses, not eternal condemnations. God does not weigh people by their occupations, but by the truth of their hearts.’

She fell silent, as if awaiting an absolution that had already been granted.

‘The sins that separate human beings from one another,’ I continued, ‘are of a different order: the lie that becomes a conscious habit, deliberate deception, cruelty exercised with pleasure, and intrigue that manipulates and destroys bonds. These do erode the soul, because they turn the other into an object and break the trust that sustains the human community. Whoever lies once learns to lie twice; whoever deceives without remorse ends up living by lies, like Macbeth, until losing himself entirely.’

I then spoke to her more gently:

‘God looks only at whether you are good and honest in your dealings with those who cross your path. He looks at whether you act with respect, whether you humiliate no one, whether you cause no harm, whether you take no pleasure in another’s pain. And I know that you are like this. As for them, their moral burden does not rest upon you: it depends on their intention towards you, on how they treat you, and on how sincere they remain with their own lives and with those they claim to love.’

Cindi lowered her gaze and then raised it again, smiling this time, happy to find someone who, speaking of God, confirmed what she herself believed.

‘True judgement,’ I added, ‘does not arise from appearances, but from intentions. The one who seeks to please in order to survive differs from the one who seeks to dominate in order to humiliate. A body offered differs from a conscience corrupted. Before Absolute Knowledge, before humanity as a whole, what matters is whether the heart remains clean.’

It is therefore fitting, at this point, to establish clearly the distinction between capital sins and mortal sins, for upon this understanding depends a moral vision capable of illuminating conscience and ordering interior life.

So-called capital sins designate fundamental vices, stable dispositions of the soul that trap the human being in repetitive patterns. They operate as inward circles that weaken freedom and impoverish the fullness of being. They act primarily inwardly: they consume the vital energy of those who suffer them and keep them revolving around themselves. Pride, sloth, gluttony, avarice, lust, wrath and envy belong to this order. The envious person wastes away in comparison; the vain depends upon the gaze of others; the slothful

abandons himself to gradual decay. These are vices that erode the soul and keep it stalled.

To these seven traditional vices it is fitting to add two that human experience reveals with particular clarity: cruelty and intrigue.

Cruelty, understood as a capital sin, consists in inner delight at the suffering of others. It manifests itself in those who experience satisfaction upon hearing of a misfortune, upon learning of a catastrophe, upon discovering the pain of strangers or neighbours. This vice differs sharply from envy. Envy directs itself against someone specific; it arises from resentment towards a particular person and from bitter comparison. Cruelty, by contrast, turns against anyone: it celebrates suffering itself, without face or name. The cruel person finds relief, consolation or joy in another’s downfall, even when that downfall occurs far away and bears no personal relation. For this reason, cruelty constitutes a capital sin: it trains the heart to dehumanise reality and to lose universal compassion.

When cruelty passes from inner disposition to action, when someone wounds, humiliates, exploits or deliberately causes another to suffer for pleasure or indifference, the vice becomes a mortal sin. At that moment, harm reaches the neighbour and breaks the fundamental human bond.

Intrigue, for its part, presents itself as the vice of one who lives by the conscious manipulation of relationships, truths and loyalties. The intriguer weaves versions, sows suspicion, divides wills and gains advantage through moral confusion. This vice produces comfort within opacity and familiarity with falsehood. Intrigue becomes a capital sin because it forms a stable disposition of the soul to live without truth and to treat human bonds as instruments.

Mortal sins belong to another order. They arise when a human being commits acts that effectively harm the other and destroy the trust that sustains the community. Theft, violence, murder, conscious exploitation, and sustained lying that corrupts shared speech strike directly at the human fabric. These acts turn the neighbour into a means, an object or a victim, and thus separate the soul from the good.

Lying deserves a central place in this reflection. Practised repeatedly, it constructs a fictitious life and encloses the liar within

his own deception. In this way degraded societies are built: through small falsehoods repeated until shared truth loses all meaning.

Ultimately, moral judgement orients itself by the intention of the heart. Conscience measures itself by the inner direction of the act: by the desire to care or to harm, to serve or to dominate, to preserve dignity or to delight in its destruction. Authentic morality examines consciences and frees the just from unfounded guilt, while exposing the corruption that disguises itself as external correctness.

Thus, ethics recovers its original purpose: to safeguard the humanity of the other and to keep the heart alive.

That afternoon, before the sea of Bocagrande, I did not tell Cindi that in 2014, shortly after my arrival from Querétaro, she had saved my life in Bucaramanga, when a group of thugs set upon me in order to rob me. She, a natural leader among them, asked about my backpack. I answered sincerely: it was a gift from my fiancée, whom I would soon marry. She saw it in my face. She heard it in my voice. She understood—with that intuitive gift possessed by certain hearts—that I was not to be touched. She withdrew with her group without harming me.

In eyes such as Cindi's, goodness awakens a deeper respect than fear. She herself, fierce in other contexts, knew how to recognise when the hand of heaven casts its shadow over someone. Many women possess that gift which some call intuition and others spiritual vision. History is full of examples: women who saw what kings ignored; governors' wives who trembled for the fate of prophets. Cindi acted thus; so act the preserved hearts.

'Society has offered you this life,' I continued, 'a life belonging to what they call the underworld of the senses. For the Lord offers us bodily pleasure, but also intellectual and spiritual delight. That some choose the corporeal is understandable. Indeed, Aristotle prescribed that to slaves and the oppressed, society left no pleasures but dancing, drinking and sex.'

'Those who govern the world,' I went on, 'the speculators of ninety per cent of the loans of poor nations, have denied you intellectual pleasure—learning, creativity, governance or administration—and have left you on this corner where you survive.'

'But even here, I see that you behave well toward those around you, and for that God is proud of you.'

'This meeting with me, this afternoon, is no accident. He arranged it so that you might hear the words I now give you. And when in your supplications you ask God to lift the virus that is unleashed today by the wickedness of men, He will hear you.'

'And Nidia, won't He hear her?' she asked, worried for her friend.

'Not for now,' I said, 'unless she repents and performs penance through good works.'

'Does God abandon us?' Javier asked.

'Never,' I replied, 'but we may abandon Him with such behaviour. And even then, yes: as a father, God always forgives, for we are His children, made in His image and likeness.'

'And just as I had a friend who ruined my first marriage with slander, and another who tried to harm me by throwing me face-first onto the ground at the

suggestion of a conspirator, even so I have forgiven them; for they are the brothers whom God placed upon my path.'

'We are all called to be Joseph, he who was cast into the pit by his brothers. God will rescue us and exalt us. In my case, it was Christ who, before the sins of the powerful, anointed me as prophet, to teach conspirators and the proud. Yes, the Lord has anointed me, not as Jesus, but as Christ's spokesman.'



‘And my desire is to establish the kingdom of heaven on earth. I am no stranger to the pleasures and sorrows of humankind; I have known them so that I might discern the goodness or the perfidy within every underworld and circle that humanity frequents.’

‘Jesus gave me in India the gift of knowing the essence of most books, so as to judge the living and the dead —that is, all whom I know or have known.’

‘This COVID-19 pandemic, and another that will come through the perfidy of the powerful —the power of the Inquisition, my former congregation, especially the Vatican— expresses that God endures our perversity until His patience is exhausted.’

‘Then, like any father, He chastises.’

‘But we can always repent and return to truth, to love, to fraternity. That is the true meaning of the prodigal son. And it is also the meaning of Oscar Wilde’s phrase —a writer condemned in the nineteenth century by a society that judged not the intentions of men but their moral appearances: *The only difference between the saint and the sinner is that every saint has a past, and every sinner has a future* “.’

The intention of the heart, I repeat, is the true bond with the sacred. The heart is a telephone permanently connected to heaven, but it loses signal when we allow anger, resentment, or envy to enter. Often, as I lie down to sleep, I relive some offence. For years I fought the demons of retaliation, but prayer —especially the rosary— dispersed those shadows. Whoever cultivates love comes to understand that all aggressions shatter against something stronger than hatred: serenity.

This principle was confirmed in distant Central Asia, when we lived in Bishkek, formerly Frunze. One night, while we slept, a group of students and lecturers —children of old Soviet structures— attempted to burn down our flat. God woke me at the precise instant when the first flames were climbing through the vestibule. The smell of soot, the crackling of the wood, the heavy air: unmistakable signs. A single bucket of water sufficed to extinguish the fire, which, a minute later, would have been fatal.

The next day, in a university meeting, I explained our lateness:

‘They tried to burn down our flat last night.’

The entire room turned their gaze towards the dean, whose face drained of colour. Truth, spoken without hatred, has the virtue of revealing the culprit without the need to accuse.

Whoever fills their heart with resentment will act wrongly, and evil will draw misfortune. Whoever fills their heart with love will act rightly, and that goodness will draw divine protection, just as Joseph’s brothers drew hunger, anguish and shame upon themselves through their betrayal. Joseph, however, was rescued and exalted.

Thus does God act.

That is why I say that doing good is enough. A single righteous action shines more brightly than hundreds of ejaculations devoid of intention. Rituals help, but they do not replace the deep law of the universe: good summons good, evil summons evil. The world’s most sophisticated spiritualities reduce all their wisdom to this truth. The Old Testament teaches it; the New confirms it; and all religions repeat it under other names: karma, hybris, sin, justice.

Never join forces to humiliate, rob or destroy an innocent person. Every conspirator will be forced to confess their crimes before their Creator. Whoever sins and prays does not break even; whoever sins and does good, renouncing new conspiracies, attains grace. I say this with the authority of lived experience: God grants knowledge of what others plot when one has deserved it through goodness.

Each day, until death, the universe offers opportunities to do good. Do not waste them. After death, judgement will be relentless and exact, as only He who knows every heart can be.

And although many may not believe it —for the world fears the inexplicable— miracles do exist. I have seen it in my own life: a candle that burned only the cover of a book by Cioran without touching a single page; a car whose battery and fluid systems failed simultaneously to prevent us from descending a deadly slope; a group of thugs who retreated without knowing why; a woman intuitively perceived as good who, without understanding it, acted under the guidance of heaven’s hand.

The universe is not chaotic: it responds, records, rewards, and punishes. Our future is now and always, in the next action each of us chooses to perform.

2. The Gift of Healing the Sick

In *The Brothers Karamazov*, Dostoevsky lets a truth fall from the mouth of an inquisitor, a truth that spans the centuries: all the sins of the world can be reduced to the three temptations of the devil to Jesus Christ in the desert. Money, fame and power. There is no crime or intrigue that does not spring from one of these heads. And yet, dear reader, we rarely ask ourselves which of them is the one that, most insistently, keeps us from reaching God and winning angels to our service.

Money

Scripture puts it plainly:

“Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil... And the tempter came to him and said, ‘If you are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread.’ But he answered, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God’” (Mt 4:1–4).

Turning stones into bread is every Wall Street financier’s dream, the modernised touch of Midas: conjuring wealth out of thin air, buying cheap to sell dear, disguising as skill what is nothing but a detour round the truth. That is how capitalism has worked since the world began, and that is how it worked as well in the bakeries of Colombian towns in the mid-twentieth century.

I never knew my grandfather Noel; when he died, I had not yet been born. But his figure inhabits my childhood like a myth of glory and downfall. The men of Charalá remembered him gathered in the bakery which by day smelt of freshly baked bread and by late afternoon had turned into café and tavern: wooden tables, Spanish playing cards strewn across the cloth, aguardiente served in rough glasses and a single light bulb hanging, yellowish, above the haze of cigarette smoke. That bakery—today converted into a small corner

museum, proud of a past that no longer exists—was the stage for his exploits as a negotiator.

There, amid laughter and the cut and thrust of the game, people told again and again the story of the afternoon when a man we shall call León parked in front of the shop a lorry loaded with cattle from Arauca, some twenty head in all, after three days’ travel along dusty roads.

“How much are they?” my grandfather asked, without rising from his chair, while León went in to order an ice-cold beer.

“A thousand pesos each,” León replied, with the calm of a man who feels he has done the deal of the month.

“I’ll buy them,” said Noel.

In those days a man’s word was worth more than any signature. Those present witnessed the agreement, sealed without document or notary.

A little later a landowner by the name of Vargas came into the bakery. He saw the cattle, admired the bearing of the beasts and asked whose they were.

“They’re mine,” Noel replied. “But if you pay me three thousand pesos, they’re yours.”

Vargas agreed at once, while León’s face collapsed in dismay. He protested, invoking the effort of three days on the road with the herd from Arauca, the fatigue, the risk he had taken on. My grandfather, with that cold logic the world applauds in good men of business, reminded him that his word had already been pledged and that, in



those days, a spoken promise weighed more than any written line. León left in a bad temper, and the town glorified Noel's astuteness, half with admiration, half with resentment.

My grandfather's cunning earned him admirers and enemies in equal measure.

In God's eyes, that skill—which people called talent—was not without its shadow. It may have inspired respect in some and envy in others, but heaven looks differently: it sees the fibre of intention, the greed hidden behind the perfect deal. My grandfather died at the age of thirty-six. The Santander family, left in the hands of adolescents and naïve ladies who knew nothing of balance sheets, deeds or debts, went in a few decades from being one of the wealthiest families in the region to one of the many that barely scrape by.

My father, still a teenager, arrived in Bucaramanga the following day, entered the room where the body lay in a glass-topped coffin and, seeing him motionless, beat on the pane as if he might wake him by hammering at his own disbelief. Death did not merely break a body; it shattered an entire economy. My grandmother, who knew nothing of business, began selling off farms and properties until she was left with a modest house and the mere obligation to survive. The family passed from abundance to narrowness. Not misery, but mere survival.

From childhood I listened, in the senile ravings of Tita Jesusita, my father's aunt, to stories of that lost dynasty: estates that stretched "beyond the horizon", uncountable cattle, coffee plantations of abundance. In her telling I was the principal heir of that Santander house, destined to manage haciendas that had already vanished before I was born. All of it dissolved in a few decades. Money without love shares the same fate as foam on water: it gleams for a moment, then disappears.

Fame

The second temptation is fame:

"Then the devil took him to the holy city and set him on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to him, 'If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written: He will command his angels concerning you...'" (Mt 4:5–6).

I was seventeen when fame came looking for me with the face of the theatre. It was May 1986 when, in Bogotá, a city still cold and harsh for a boy from the provinces, the stage opened before me. In May 1986 I played Federico García Lorca at the Teatro La Comedia in Bogotá, today the Teatro Libre de Chapinero, under the direction of Víctor Hugo Morant. For a provincial boy, the theatre was a temple where words took on flesh.

That night the seats were filled with critics, academics, television

personalities, owners of the major media. When the first act of *Remembering Lorca* ended, the applause fell on my skin like warm rain. In the dressing room, a narrow room with white walls, magnates, actors and journalists began to file in: they congratulated me, promised to call me on Monday, spoke of roles, contracts, a brilliant future. I felt upon me the invisible spotlight of choice: it would have been enough to let myself be carried along, to accept, to say "yes".

The second act began. Suddenly, something within me—that secret "self" that dwells in us and which some call a guardian angel—rebelled. That self which we are and yet do not know is the same that I would later recognise in the "hidden area" of the Johari window, as described by the psychologists Joseph Luft and Harrington Ingham: that which only God and our unconscious truly know.

Since childhood a Gospel verse had carved a furrow in my conscience: "What shall it profit a man if he gains the whole world



and loses his soul?” That night, on stage, the question became flesh. In the final monologue I broke off the text, corrected a line that did not need correcting, and let a gesture of forgetfulness cross my face. The audience uttered a murmur of surprise and disapproval; the tension could be felt like a thread suddenly cut. In that instant I shattered, in Bogotá’s eyes, the crystal of promises laid before me fifty minutes earlier.

Many years later I understood that this “blunder” was fidelity to a destiny written deep within. Had I accepted, that night, the leap into stardom, I would have known women, money, recognition, flattery, and perhaps would have become yet another of those successful young men who, from their podium, look down on those who “have not had the right opportunity”. “He is very talented,” they would have said of me in my deceitful good fortune.

Van Gogh put it lucidly: fame is the false feeling that one need no longer worry about anything. I would add this: it is the illusion that one’s needs are solved and the struggle is over, when in truth only the nature of the struggle changes. Instead of fighting for bread, one fights against the court of flatterers, the envious and the false friends who surround anyone who shines too brightly.

The temptation of fame returned years later, disguised as official honour. On 31 January 2014, President Juan Manuel Santos singled me out among the one hundred Colombians who best represented the country in the world. In the context of the Nobel Peace Prize, he quoted verses of mine from *The Loot, dead bird flies aloft*.

“We create the future ourselves; we must connect with our deepest desires, and every obstacle will become a blessing.”

Minutes later, in front of the cameras, he decorated me and, as he shook my hand, offered me one of the film grants of ten billion pesos, awarded directly, without competition or selection process. These were the very same coveted grants that people spoke of as golden prizes reserved for a handful of the system’s chosen ones.

At first sight such an offer seemed to open every door: immediate prestige, unlimited resources, guaranteed recognition. Yet as I listened, I realised that to accept would mean entering a circuit where merit yields to favour, and where artistic creation is subordinated to the will of those who dispense benefits without transparency.



I sensed then, with the same clarity with which one recognises an intimate truth, that my path belonged to another tradition: that of silent work, of fruit obtained through effort and merit, not through appointment. Every genuine work demands to be judged by its quality and not by proximity to power. Every spiritual vocation requires that the purity of its source be preserved.

So, I simply replied:

“We’re working on it.”

I turned him gently towards the cameras, with a firmness that did nothing to conceal my refusal. A Spanish friend, seeing the scene later, remarked that the one who looked like the president was me, not the future Nobel laureate.

Santos did not like it. He ignored the e-mails I later sent him about a documentary financed with money intended for displaced people, which denounced waste and corruption. The director of the documentary, under pressure from officials close to the government and from an old university classmate now ensconced in high offices, rang me to say he was being threatened with death. The interviewees spoke of irregular contracts and diverted funds; according to them, the threats came from envoys of Santos himself, angry because, in those witnesses’ words, “we were speaking ill of him to the journalists in Britain”. Charlie Philips, a documentary-maker at *The Guardian*, managed to see and comment on some scenes of the project, and that single foreign gaze was enough for fear to spread through certain offices.

Other, smaller acts of sabotage—such as a former student who tried to charge an exorbitant sum for an edition we had agreed to do without payment—revealed the same pattern: a left transformed into a mafia, determined to silence any voice that points to the blood and money behind its slogans.

From that broth of corruption emerged at least eight attempts on my life in Bogotá, carried out by hired thugs in the pay of the then mayor, Gustavo Petro—later President—attempts that failed for reasons that admit no logical explanation. Those involved fell ill or died; Santos and Petro themselves suffered cancer, and a rumour began to circulate in the city: it was not wise to attack “the prophet”, the writer shielded by a strange good fortune.

Yet the subtlest temptation has not been money or fame, but the use of the gift of healing the sick as an instrument of power.

For years, those who have attacked me most fiercely—my declared enemies—have come to me with stories of sick children, dying fathers, wives sunk in depression. They hope that, in my compassion, I will extend over them the grace the Lord has granted me. And so, I have done, because a heart that knows mercy cannot close itself. My prayers, my presence, the simple act of laying a hand on a shoulder would often become real relief.

In the end, their insistence was such that I would often choose to play along with the pretence—pretence, for they already knew it—of saying that the Lord had blessed me with the gift of healing the sick. I knew this gift was not to be displayed as a spectacle. My healings therefore went hand in hand with a warning not to publicise them, because my time had not yet come.

Even a close relative, whom I have seen recover on more than one occasion after intense prayer, was reprimanded by her confessor. He told her to accept her illnesses in silence, without resorting to “spiritual experiments” or asking me again to intercede. My mother, whom I have healed several times, received that order to suffer in silence, as though God’s consolation were an indiscretion. I did not need her to tell me; I sensed it. I have learnt to trust those hunches the world despises.

A whole human being possesses intuition, imagination, visions; we are not machines that respond to algorithms. God revealed to me that he looked at my life not from my falls, but from my intentions. And my intentions—even when I stumbled in concupiscence and desire—were never to harm, but to seek. Sin does not lie in imagining, but in wanting to wound; that is why rape, sexual violence and prostitution as slavery are abominable, whereas the play of love between free people—without harm, without deceit—belongs to another order that God himself will judge.

In 2019 I attended Mass of my own free will for the last time, at the congregation of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in Bucaramanga. During the homily an irascible Jesuit recognised me among the faithful. I saw his eyes flare; his sermon suddenly veered towards a tirade against miracles. He shouted that they were inventions, myths for the ignorant, old wives’ tales. His vehemence was such that, at one point, a brutal swearword slipped from his lips in the pulpit—“a curse of the lowest sort”, as my grandmother would have put it—provoking a shocked murmur from the congregation. His denial of grace made him stumble over his own tongue. Shortly afterwards his health collapsed during the pandemic. Whoever blasphemes against the work of God wounds his own soul first.

Power

The third temptation was power.

“Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory, and he said to him, ‘All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me’” (Mt 4:8–9).

Those who yearn to rule often turn to witches, sorcerers and palm-readers who promise them dominion in exchange for sinister sacrifices. This is not a matter of village superstition: there are fraternities of teachers, bureaucrats and intellectuals who cling to their posts by handing out food and drink laced with graveyard earth to anyone who dares to question them, convinced that in the darkness of such rites—symbolic sacrifices and others not so symbolic—they are pleasing Moloch, the ancient devourer of children. Germán Castro Caicedo told the tale in *La bruja*; I have seen it played out again in other settings.

Not long ago the left-wing elite of Bucaramanga—the very people who proclaim themselves defenders of the poor while bowing down before their own idols—tried to cast the same spell on me. Knowing that the Lord has anointed me as his prophet and has promised to protect me to an old age known only to Him and to me, I accepted without fear the black coffee they offered me one afternoon in May 2022 in the city centre. Deep in my stomach I knew it had been seasoned with hatred. That night I felt in my chest the anguish proper to tormented souls: a weight, an oppression, a cold that was not of this world.

Armed with an unshakeable faith in the superiority of those of us under divine protection—the very theme of my novel Sustained by the faith I narrated in *Andes Gótica*¹, I faced, in dreams, a being without head and without femur. It was no metaphor; it was presence. Instead of fearing it, I spoke to it with compassion. I told it to read my tale “The Finest Hostel”, from *Confessions of the Departed*². The next day, in another vision, that spectre returned in gratitude and led me up to a third floor. It showed me the grey door of a flat: I recognised the building at once. It was the home of the philosopher-poet who,

¹ Santander Ferreira, Hugo Noël (2021). *Andes Gótica, el Vampiro de Körpen*. Editorial Stanley.

² Santander Ferreira, Hugo Noël (2021). *Confesiones de Difuntos: Cuentos de Terror*. Editorial Stanley.

on his Facebook wall, boasted that he had learnt from Lenin that one had to use “all forms of struggle” to defeat the enemy.

For him, the true Bible was historical materialism; faith was a waste of time; violence, a legitimate path. That very day he had written that his life had made no sense until he found in Marx the answer to all mysteries. I knew him: a devout Marxist, admirer of leaders who, as I know—because God has revealed it to me—die with innocent blood on their hands. Whoever justifies killing does not enter the Kingdom, however many speeches about equality he may deliver. Since then that philosopher-poet has been, on the spiritual plane, tormented by that demon and others he summoned so lightly.

Those who have seen the film *The Conjuring 3* (2021) understand the fate of sorcerers who call up demons against beings of light: they think they are handling forces, but end up as broken toys of the very things they invoked. Years before, I had studied texts on witchcraft only to confirm what Swedenborg had already described: pathetic spirits who, in trying to dominate the future with spells, bind themselves to deeper abysses. Several of the stories in *Historia Cifrada* show the failure of astrologies, tarot cards, the I Ching and other oracles: all of them crash against an inviolable law. The only forces that truly determine the course of time and space are love and goodness, which are light and truth.

To renounce these three sirens—money, fame, power—carries both a price and a reward. The price is loneliness in a world that worships the opposite. The reward is that, as the Gospel says, when



the devil departs “angels came and ministered to him” (Mt 4:11). I have experienced it.

In April and May 2022, I attended the Bogotá International Book Fair, where I set out the spiritual truths that govern the universe in twelve lectures, now available on my YouTube channel, Santander Cinemas. There I endured the ambushes laid by the modern Inquisition through interviews and fraudulent contracts. A sudden storm, one of those that strip roofs in a matter of minutes, struck Bogotá just when certain officials at the Ministry of Education were planning fresh manoeuvres against me. The wind tore off sheets of corrugated metal and lifted roofs, and they, superstitious in their atheism, understood the sign and backed down. The Lord urged me to rise from my spiritual lethargy and speak openly of His presence in my life. From that came the documentary *Matrimonio a Primera Vista*; a second part will bear the title *El Juicio Final—The Last Judgement*.

In one of those interviews, a journalist—with that civilised cruelty that only television knows how to disguise—told me, live before the country, that my life must be very sad, having lost four children, one after another, year after year, with my wife Leyla. I replied that, for us, those losses had been gain: with the certainty of eternity, we know our children live better with God in paradise than in the abysses of this world. I quoted the *Mahabharata*: “If you die, you gain heaven; if you triumph, you shall enjoy the earth.”

For centuries, saints and prophets were hounded and crushed by the forces that ruled this illusory world. The Lord has revealed to me that this age of bloody sacrifice is over. The Jews awaited a warrior Messiah and received a gentle lamb; Christians still await a Christ descending bodily from the clouds. But God chose another way: to descend invisibly to Madras—Mary’s city in India—on a ladder of clouds, in order to anoint me, Hugo Noël, as judge and spokesman. There, in that revelation, he cast me at His feet and answered the question that rose in my heart: “Why me?”

I am no saint in the saccharine sense some prefer; I have known lustful thoughts, anger, impatience. And yet He said to me: “I do not judge men by their deeds; I judge them by their heart.”

I have lived among hard, selfish and violent people; yet also among beggars, misfits and the despised. I have passed through eleven cities in eight countries, breathed the air of visible and invisible

prisons, felt on my neck the breath of killers and the tenderness of souls whom no one sees. I know, from experience, every lie, every intrigue, every murderous impulse that cloaks itself in justice. When I speak to someone, I sense the density of their malice or the transparency of their love.

Just as the Father lived in the Son, Father, Son and Holy Spirit live in me in a way I cannot fully express in human words. Cast at His feet in that revelation, I heard: “Why you, you ask?” I myself kept asking: why me, son of a people without history, cast out time and again by my brothers, stoned by my ancestors, singled out by those who cannot bear that a man without guild, mafia or clique should live in the truth?

In 2023, while I was waging with the Lord what I call the Third World War—a spiritual battle that has little to do with geopolitical maps and everything to do with hearts—His answer took the shape of a poem in *Rey de Reyes, el regreso de Jesús resucitado*. There was written the song that sums up His choice:

Song Eighteenth - Why Did I Choose You? You Ask

*Why did I choose you? you ask
Son of a city without history
thrown by his brothers
Stoned by his ancestors*

*Because you never hit the weak
because you have grown wonderfully
And you never quit love
because you never condemned*

*because you have always forgiven
And only sin has enraged you
because you always gave up
The enticements of the world*

*Because you bared fame
Money and insipid power
And for much more, yours is the time*

I, Petrus Romanus_____

Yours are the worlds and yours are my hosts

*Presence of the three
Father, Son, and the Holy Ghost
To you, yes, Hugo, we anointed
On June 1, 2011*

That day, in an invisible blessing, heaven revealed to me an ancient, age-old covenant. For from the day I was born, whenever the demon of money, fame or power returned, insinuating itself beneath its old masks, I honoured that voice which raised me up in Madras and threw me at His feet. I was chosen not for my worldly merit, but for a secret stubbornness in loving and forgiving, even when the price of that fidelity is loneliness, slander or persecution.



_____Hugo Noël Santander Ferreira

3. Jesus' call to India, nest of prophets

Those of us who believe never cease to praise the Lord, and it is precisely in our deepest trials—when the flesh is torn and the spirit trembles—that the heart takes pride in trusting Him, as Job proclaimed with a courage that spans millennia:

“Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him” (Job 13:15).

My life began under the sign of loss. Yaneth Cristina, my little sister, died when I was only eight. That childhood grief—described in [*Hymns to Death*](#), a book Maistre called a spiritual odyssey—was my first mystical school. There stands the child I once was: a boy who went to Mass, who listened to the stories of Jesus and believed them literally, with the innocence of one who has not yet encountered the world's falsehood. Grief and certainty coexisted from that moment on: the rending sorrow of her absence, and at the same time the inexplicable conviction that I would one day see her again.

Perhaps that is why, in my adolescence, I wished to become a Jesuit: like the priest in one of François Charles Mauriac's stories, to avoid bringing children into the world who might rekindle that



primordial pain. But God does not relinquish His designs, and years later He led me to marriage.

I married Leyla, the most transparent of souls, in 2015. And the Lord granted us not one, nor two, nor three, but four children who died before birth. We wept as all grieving parents do, and I rendered those hardest of trials into verse in my book *In Persecutione Extrema: Tribulations of a Christian at the End of Times*.

In those days I perceived unsettling signs: faces mocking our suffering, unwelcome presences—an Anglo-Saxon nurse on her first day caring for us, a Cuban man declaring the child would be lost without ordering a single test—that seemed to rejoice in misfortune. These coincidences revealed secret forces hindering our lineage. I knew powerful forces were attacking us, and I prayed that the Lord would restrain them.

During those desolate days, we also endured the reproaches of friends and relatives, unable to fathom what we were living through. But my faith was greater than my grief. That faith sustained Leyla—who, as a psychologist, knows the stories of mothers broken by experiences like ours—and together we overcame what would have sunk many marriages. She is mine, and I am hers. And I know, with a certainty that comes not from the senses but from the spirit, that our four children live in Paradise, that they shall attain eternal glory, and that they await me.

Often, as I fall asleep, I feel them: they come to me, embrace me, advise me. No one who has not received spiritual visitations understands these intimate touches of heaven.

Amid that pain, I also perceived human wickedness surrounding us. Spies were sent to me; one woman—sent by the political left, which had repeatedly failed to destroy me—asked whether I had children “that I knew of”, clearly intending to trace them and harm them. Those who guard their earthly power fear that I will be recognised as a prophet and believe I will establish a spiritual monarchy, for that is what *they* would do if they possessed what the Lord has given me. They do not understand that one who serves God does not rule as men rule, but as the Spirit commands.

Those days became my own Ignatian dark night. St Ignatius teaches that there comes a time when God turns His face away as divine pedagogy. There, faith is tested: when one must accept that

God’s will does not coincide with one’s own. Many fail this trial and unleash tragedy: from abortion to massacres and collective suicides.

But I understood that even punishments are blessings. Through those losses, God affirmed the truth of what I had lived in Chennai on 1 June 2011, when He anointed me as His prophet and bestowed all His blessings upon me.

As a journalist boasted at the beginning of her 2022 interview, worldly logic dictates that one who loses his children ends up melancholic, alcoholic, or resentful. Such is the thought of the world; for those who crave the world, death is the greatest tragedy. For those who believe in Christ, death is the greatest blessing.

And is not death, after all, an illusion? A series of attachments—as Buddha taught—from which we must strip ourselves in order to reach perfection or Nirvana?

I praise God not only for hearing my supplications, but also for disregarding them when necessary. Great indeed are the joys of those who give thanks for His paternal chastisements, His corrections, His omnipotence; for we trust in His will, manifest in the course of days and nights.

Let us return to the days in which I drafted the first version of these lines: in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, when the world yearned for a vaccine to dispel the anguish hanging over cities and fields

alike.

I wrote then in a local newspaper:

“Bucaramanga is the metropolis with the fewest infections in the country (12). I thank the Lord for hearing my prayers.”

I repeat: everything we receive comes from the Creator, even that which we believe comes from other human beings. I have never concealed my love for the Virgin of Chiquinquirá and the Sacred Heart of Jesus. That devotion—in deed and word—is the source of every intuition, every revelation, every vision.

My Arrival in India

I arrived in Chennai in November 2010. After two months of adjustment, Ponraj, my driver, took me to a shop to buy sheets for my new room. When I told him I was Catholic, he returned with an almanac of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, blond and blue-eyed. The image

*I, Petrus Romanus*_____

did not please me—the historical Jesus must have been dark-haired—so I hung it in the vestibule with near indifference. My flat was in truth nothing more than an immense vestibule and a study.



I taught intensive courses at the Sivani Ganessa Film Institute. My colleagues asked me to make a short film to demonstrate my mastery of the cinematic art. I knew it was a test; but I had nothing to fear, for I had already made three feature films as actor, director, and producer.

So, I wrote *A Shortcut to India*, a script that distilled my five months of experience: the tale of a foreigner arguing with a rickshaw driver over an overcharge; when the quarrel threatens to turn violent, providence intervenes to show that sharing one's privileges is worth more than defending them.

We filmed it one April afternoon, and I edited it amid difficulties I shall recount elsewhere. Its final poem belongs to *America from North to South – Anima Mundi*.

Envy that Travels

Perversity and envy had travelled from Colombia. Lecturers and former students wrote to newspapers to disparage my work in India

_____ *Hugo Noël Santander Ferreira*

and to question the minimalist style of my feature films *The Crimes of Kennedy* and *Corrupt Colombia*, made without a budget in a city without trained actors. Though the journalists told me they laughed at such malicious comments, my sensibility was wounded.

Why envy a Colombian who crossed the world to learn another language and culture? Is it inevitable to coexist with the incarnation of Cain?

I accepted those months of solitude as an opportunity to write the story of the blessings God had granted me in Bogotá, Philadelphia, Porto, Manchester, Bishkek, London, Bucaramanga, and Chennai.

The Voice

One night in early May, while writing feverishly about my youthful loves in Pennsylvania, I heard a voice:

“Hugo!”

I rose, crossed the dark vestibule, and reached the door leading to the corridor. The three-storey building had deserted offices; I walked to the railing overlooking an empty pool. I scanned the stairways and corners in the gloom. Nothing.

I returned to my desk.

Again:

“Hugo!”

I went out once more. Nothing.

At the third call, the voice seemed to come from the depths of the vestibule, and then I saw it: the image of the Sacred Heart shining with its own light.

In my mind I heard:

“Why have you left Me outside your room?”

I realised that for the first time in my life I was living without a crucifix, without an image, without an altar. I embraced the almanac tenderly, like a child ever so gently reprimanded by a faithful friend. I carried it to my room, and as I hung it before my desk, I said:

—Lord, forgive me... it's just that this is not Your true image.

And He replied with a sweetness that shook me:

“Do not judge Me by My face; judge Me by My heart.”

I understood my error: I had seen only the blond face of the image, not the radiant love that always bleeds from the Messiah's

breast because of human perversity. He also told me to pity the blond, blue-eyed man, for having ruled the world he could rule it no longer, burdened by accumulated prejudices.

The joy I felt then—and still feel—I keep as the greatest treasure of my days.

Almost without noticing, I began dressing as He did, wearing the dhotis I had bought in Chennai. My soul filled with bliss, like a bride on the eve of her wedding.

From then on, I had continual mystical experiences: the Lord bestowed His blessings upon me and revealed the mission prepared for me before my birth. Some of these revelations appear in my books published by Santaley, which recount a life in grace, free from illness, sustained by renunciation of fame, money, and power.

I also understood my former lives: Peter, Jeanne d'Arc, Spinoza. I discerned my place in spiritual history. I write now, eleven years later, during the second plague that—as the Lord foretold after the earthquake of 11 April 2012 in Chennai—would strike the world because of the sins of its rulers.

The first version of these events was written in 2012, at the Lord's request, as a long poem entitled *Sonnets to Isba*, included in the first edition of *Hymns to Love*. In 2023 He asked me to publish it independently and translate it into seven of the languages I had the joy of studying. *Hymns to Jesus: The Anointing of the Judge of the Living and the Dead* are letters of hope addressed to the world's churches in Latin, Italian, Russian, English, French, Portuguese, and Spanish. The text is available on Amazon and freely on the Internet Archive and platforms such as Inkitt.

The poetry volume *King of Kings: The Return of the Risen Jesus* forms the second set of mystical experiences (February 2022 – January 2023). There the Lord commanded me to proclaim my message without fear, protected by armies of angels and subdued demons. He revealed that my love for Him unites me to the Holy Trinity and grants me power over the elements—not as an arbitrary faculty, but as a dormant gift, always subject to the Father's will.

The joy I felt then, and still feel, because the Lord set His eyes upon me, I cherish as the greatest treasure of my life.

Almost without realizing it, I began to dress like Him, using the dhotis I had bought in the streets of Chennai.

My soul was filled with bliss, like that of a bride before her wedding.

The mystical experiences I have had since then, in which the Lord bestowed all His blessings upon me, I will recount for the first time this Holy Week of the pandemic.

They corroborate everything I have lived and written: a life guided by divine grace, protected from illness, and strengthened by the renunciation of fame, money, and power. I, Hugo Noël, rewrite here my destiny by the grace of Jesus, who descended to me in India to anoint me in the presence of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.



4. “The Loot. Dead bird flies aloft”, a metaphor for my death and resurrection



The original cast of "El Botín, Ave Muerta Vuela Alto". From right to left: Camilo Hernández, Hugo Noël Santander, Sandra Barreiro, and Diana Barragán. Photo by Mauro Klavijo.

I attended kindergarten at the state primary school attached to the Normal de Señoritas of Bucaramanga. My teacher, Cecilia, was very sweet, patient as far as the norms of the time allowed, but her supervisor was a harsh teacher called Teresa, shaped by a pedagogy that understood discipline as severity. On the day of the final interview with the mothers of the class, she pushed Cecilia aside and, without knowing me or having dealt with me beyond a statistic on a list, gave my mother the most ominous verdict a teacher could pronounce upon a pupil:

“He’ll be a social misfit, a guerrilla fighter or a terrorist,” she declared.

Today I can say that this sentence spoke more of her fears than of my destiny; it was the diagnosis of an adult incapable of reading a

restless, sensitive and compassionate child, a child who did not fit into the grid of Colombian state schooling in the nineteen-seventies.

When I got home, I was locked in a room and mistreated by my mother. That was the beginning of the hell I lived through in my childhood, with beatings and blows from my parents almost every day. I do not judge them now from the comfort of hindsight: they were ordinary people, children of their time, who believed they were obeying the social mandate to “straighten out the child” with blows, just as they themselves had been brought up. I was the exceptional one, the different one; the conflict was not between executioners and victim, but between generations, between realities that did not know how to meet. That tension runs through my novels *New Manhattan Soirées* and *Desde el Viaducto*, to which I refer the reader who wishes to delve into those years.

My only comfort was a small Christ that hung in my bedroom, and the cold of the tiled floor where I would lie down to talk to Him. The chapter I entitled *The Christ and the Tile* was born of those silent dialogues: while my body trembled on the frozen tiles, my soul found refuge in the gaze of that tiny Christ, very different from the saccharine images on holy cards, closer to the Christ of *The Miracle of Marcelino*, yet intimate, every day, without cinematic miracles, with only the miraculous persistence of listening to a child. How many times His gaze stopped me from drinking one of the bottles of poison my parents kept in a medicine cabinet fixed to the wall of my room! My marks were good, but the slightest excuse was enough to punish me, from the accusation of a neighbour to my bad handwriting; I was also constantly punished with being shut in; I lost all my neighbourhood friends and tried to take refuge in reading comics, but sinisterly they were forbidden and confiscated, as if imagination itself were a threat.

Enchanted by the promises of Christ which I heard at Mass of a better world after death, I concluded that the best thing would be to die and reach paradise. I was eight years old and the Lord heard my plea, though not in the conscious and dramatic way an adult might imagine, but with the ingenuous logic of a child who confuses comic-book panels with Newtonian physics.

In 1977, from the back of my father’s company pick-up truck that was taking me home, I saw some boys playing football at the entrance to the Augustinian school. In a comic I had read, a boy

jumped from a moving vehicle, landed on his feet and carried on running as if nothing had happened. I literally believed that that was how the world worked. I threw myself, innocently, onto an unpaved road on the outskirts of Bucaramanga; in my mind there was no will to commit suicide, only the simple thought:

“I’ll jump, land well and play football.”

I felt time freeze in a serene, contemplative state, as if the whole world had been suspended in a single breath; then a growing pain returned me to the flow of time.

Today I know that I convulsed, bled profusely from my ears and lay unconscious and lifeless for more than an hour. For those around me, I was dead; for me, that stretch was erased from conscious memory, as if my soul had decided to protect me. The first sound I heard on coming back was not an external voice, but my own groan. Before opening my eyes, I saw, with a non-visual certainty, the image of my mother coming out of the house; I was not yet looking at her, but I could already see her coming. When at last I opened my eyes, I found she was exactly where my mind had anticipated. That was, perhaps, my first clear memory of an extra-physical vision: consciousness a few seconds ahead of the flesh.

I spent a month in hospital, where I felt very ill, dizzy, unable to move without the world breaking apart in circles. It was dreadful. One of the things I most regret about that experience is that the mother of the boys who had been with me that day used to come and visit me to wring a “confession” out of me. She wanted me to say that they had pushed me off the lorry, from the back of the pick-up. They had not, but I was so fragile, so dizzy and ill, and she pressed me so insistently, despite my denials, that I ended up saying yes just to get her off my back. It was a real moral torture for a child who had barely just returned from death. I know that afterwards she punished them and even withdrew them from that school. That forced lie, that guilt heaped upon innocent shoulders, is still a thorn in my memory and has reappeared, transfigured, in many characters in my novels: children who are forced to uphold an unjust world with their word.

Twenty-three years later, on the outskirts of Manchester, my dreams brought back what had happened, not as a linear memory but as a zone of continuous ecstasy in which a voice asked me whether I wanted to help humanity or plunge myself into greater delights. I felt compassion and came back, with my ear bleeding, to the scene where

an anguished driver was taking me home. I noticed that my first cry had been uttered before my mother arrived, which prevented her from thinking what everyone already assumed: my death. That choice – renouncing delights in order to return to compassion – is the remote origin of all my later decisions, even those I made without knowing it.

I remember in particular a sibyl I met in France in the summer of 2004. She was so popular that those who had access to her had to pay her an annual fee, which entitled them to two consultations a month. A distinguished relative of my ex-wife told me that that month he still had a consultation left and that he was willing to give it to me, in view of my interest in the subject.

“François Mitterrand was one of her clients,” he said, as one who opens a door onto the mysteries of state.

He drove me to a mansion in an upmarket neighbourhood, a French middle-class house, spacious, spotless, unostentatious, covered in beautiful creepers and surrounded by garden flowers. The furniture was classical: cast-iron chairs in the patio, sober tables, light curtains, everything steeped in a soft scent of roses, incense and new fragrances; the very air seemed newly washed. As I entered, I discovered, on a small lectern, a manuscript of Origen in ancient Greek.

“It must have cost her a fortune,” I thought, wondering whether she knew dead languages or whether the book acted as a talisman.

The sibyl must have been about fifty-five, thin, quick in her movements, restless; she wore rings and discreet jewellery that glinted when she raised her hands. It was like watching a seer opening her eyes to receive signals from beyond the room. She spoke and suddenly broke off to send a text on her mobile, as if visions and text messages belonged to the same current of information. The contrast between the archaic – the Greek manuscript, the name of Origen – and the contemporary – the phone vibrating – created a climate of perfect unreality.

Then I wrote a poem in which I recount our encounter:

America from North to South – Sibyl

*We were lost in the east of Rome
when a distant kinsman called us to a flowering house.*

*"This is the Cumaean Sibyl," he said.
"She sees through your secrets and your past."*

*We waited in a narrow room of dried lilacs
where a volume of Origen lay
on the rise and fall of angels in Cana,
and it was written in the language of the dead.*

*She read our lines according to the orbs.
Lovers gone by, enemies and cities
came to her mind like flakes of snow,*

*and the secret promise of our home.
But then her dark countenance grew pale.
"You were sent back from the pillars of the dead,"*

*she said, "to suffer betrayal and deceit,
and you are dying to return
to Arcadia, where goodness reigns.*

These verses interpret not only spoken language, but also the language of the body and of thought. The sibyl was reading our hands, but also our gestures, the tiniest tremors in the voice. Often, when I unmask a lie, the person concerned takes refuge in "I never said that", and I reply, "no, but you thought it, I can see it written on your face". The seer worked with that same material: the way one breathes, the fleeting glint in the pupil, the way the body tenses at a single word.

The sibyl described what she saw, from her rootedness in this world:

"A black, frightening hole," she murmured in French. "Le trou noir de la mort."

What is light for an enlightened person is darkness for a darkened soul. What for me had been rest, suspension, peace, appeared to her as a menacing chasm, a reminder of a death that does not dare speak its name. As we left, however, the seer thanked us for our visit, for her daily contact was with rancorous, vengeful souls, and in us she had felt an immense love and tranquillity. It was as if, for a moment, she too had breathed a different air.

For decades I concealed these events, considering them alien to the reality prescribed by social norms. Society demands flat, verifiable accounts, without fissures through which transcendence might seep. In India I understood, however, that art is born outside normativity and is enriched by possibilities which, through fantasy, are lucid and coherent; theology, metaphysics, ontology, comparative religion, mysticism, psychology, history and other disciplines all contribute to inspire these scenes, like underground currents feeding the same root.

The ideas embodied by the protagonists of this play – apparently antagonistic ideas – on immortality, religions, justice, forgiveness and the destiny of Being, are all confronted by a character who claims to have died and risen again. That character is Samuel and, although in the playbill he appears as a dramatic creation, at the spiritual subsoil of the work he is my alter ego, the double who returns from the black void to interrogate the living.

A metaphysical comedy inspired by American noir fiction and by the argumentative comedies of George Bernard Shaw, *El Botín, Ave Muerta Vuela Alto* (The Loot, Dead Bird Flies High) portrays the efforts of Lola and Guillermo to obtain a million dollars after long years of hypocrisy, intrigue and infidelity. Echoing the plot of *The Postman Always Rings Twice*, Lola persuades Guillermo, a former mercenary, to murder her husband, Samuel, in order to inherit his property. The intensity of their hatred contrasts with the seemingly prophetic tone of Samuel, the risen man, whose return from death wrecks all human calculations.

Paradoxically, at first the role of Samuel was to be played by an atheist actor. He could not learn the part. The lines slipped from his mouth, as if the character refused to inhabit a body that did not believe in resurrection. In the end I realised that Samuel was calling me: it was I who had to embody him. We let the actor go, not for ideological reasons, but out of fidelity to the mystery. I played the role of Samuel, the risen man, and each rehearsal was for me a ritual return to that yard by the Augustinian school, to the jump, to the hospital, to Manchester, to the question posed by the voice.

The rehearsal process was as intense as it was revealing. The actress who eventually took on the role of Lola, a drama student of mine, memorised the text with astonishing precision and gave the character a blend of vulnerability and cruelty that no adult had achieved. The chemistry on stage with Camilo Hernández and Diana

Barragán was immediate, a tacit harmony of breathing. With Sandra Barreiro, by contrast, the relationship was more strained: she came from the radical left, accustomed to reading the world through the lens of cliques and conspiracies. She once commented behind my back, as an assistant told me later:

“Now you and I are the only ones left,”



She was referring to the old left-wing brotherhood she believed they belonged to. In Colombia the left often behaves like a mafia, convinced that power is a loot to be carved up among comrades, as

can be seen today in the bloated bureaucracy of the Petro era. That outlook coloured, but also enriched, her performance, for *El Botín* is precisely a play about the illegitimate appropriation of what belongs to others, whether family estates or human souls.

The clashes between antagonistic world-views raise questions about the prejudices and beliefs our generation weaves around death:

“Is it possible to rise from the dead? And if it were to happen, as in *El Botín*, how would humanity react? How can we reconcile the dogmas of different religions, from reincarnation to redemption, from vengeance to punishment or forgiveness?”

The complexities, beliefs and contradictions of the characters in *El Botín* lay bare the power and ambition that society itself cultivates and tolerates.

The title *El Botín, Ave Muerta Vuela Alto* was also inspired by a mural in Palermo depicting a dead bird. The bird was black and red,

gigantic, upside down, its wings open towards a sky that could not be seen, as if its fall had at the same time been a flight. That expression was given to me in a dream while I was writing the play; I no longer



recall at what point I came to assume that this subtitle was analytical – that is, proper to the work itself. Later I identified it as an echo of ancient Egypt, and how great my surprise when I found that it was indeed the philosophy of the Pharaohs’

religion as set out in *The Book of the Dead*.

For the ancient Egyptians the soul was transformed into a bird after the death of the body. The *Ba*, with a human head and a bird’s body, hovers over the tomb and ascends. In my life that image was telling me that the child who crashed on the road did not simply fall: he became a dead bird which, nevertheless, flies high.

Since our première in Bogotá, the phrase has gained strength as an expression of condolence, a poetic and hopeful way of facing death. Many friends, on losing a loved one, write to me: “Dead bird flies high,” as one who sends a bird of light into the sky of the departed.

El Botín is a blend of genres and styles, with interpretations that will vary according to the concerns of each spectator: a thriller for a noir filmmaker, a metaphysical discussion for a theologian, a religious farce for an agnostic. The audience reacted enthusiastically; every performance was packed to the end. Some spectators came up to tell me that, seeing Samuel return from death, they began to look differently at their own small daily deaths: failures, betrayals, unresolved grief.

My passion for the feelings and stories of the beings I have encountered along my path is the source that inspires my plays. Not long ago someone said to me:

“Do you do theatre? Don’t you realise that when actors give up being themselves, they stop living their own lives?”

To which I replied:

“On the contrary, an actor never ceases to be himself; only now he is a being who lives intensely, literally in his own skin, the emotions that the playwright and the director recreate, distil and transmit in an act of communion with the audience. Only he or she is capable of living several lives at once. The actor does not abdicate his life: he multiplies it.”

The theatre, and sometimes the cinema, is the space in which the entire audience lives, for a few precious and brief moments, in the world of truth – that is, in the Kingdom of Heaven. Where everyday reality seems to close in upon itself, fiction opens a crack through which light seeps. In *El Botín*, *Ave Muerta Vuela Alto*, that light takes the form of a risen man who demands justice not only for his inheritance, but for the very mystery of life and death. And every time Samuel comes on stage, every time he utters a line that I myself wrote and lived, I feel that eight-year-old boy still jumping from the lorry, only now he falls onto a stage and, instead of convulsing on the ground, he rises as a dead bird which, despite everything, keeps flying high.

5. The Gift of the Holy Spirit: Wisdom



The offices of the conspirators against Noël Santander, located in ultra-secret sites, were swept away by the fury of the heavens last month. I saw it with the clarity with which true dreams are remembered: maps, names, coordinates, and over them the invisible hand of the weather twisting the course of the winds. A hurricane unleashed by Cuban santeros from Caracas against Colombia was diverted at the last instant; the clouds turned, as though changing their mind, and the storm discharged its fury upon other lands. There were floods in Venezuela, destruction in Cuba and in Florida,

ravaging Tampa and even reaching the monastery near Pittsburgh, the source of the persecutions of Petrus Romanus.

Men of power ask themselves in secret: why should *He* be resurrected? Why permit Christ to make Himself present again in a foreigner, in someone who does not belong to their circles? Prelates and gurus, reluctant to recognise the presence of Shiva, of Christ, or of the Spirit in an outsider, whisper among themselves, unable to understand that the Lord dwells in whoever identifies entirely with Him.



Let it be said: resurrection is not a unique experience. There are hundreds of compilations of mediums and people who go out and return through a tunnel or a light—as was my case—to what they recognise as the beyond. What is extraordinary is not that someone crosses that threshold, but what one does afterwards with the knowledge received.

The seer Benjamín Solari Parravicini announced several of the changes I have discussed throughout my travels: a world without borders, with universal citizenship; Catholic priests and nuns married

and with children; politicians at the service of their communities, chosen from among the most brilliant and honest university students. He also announced the presence of Jesus Christ in the interval 2002–2022. Some await a new body descending among clouds; others, a televised appearance. My experience has shown me something different: Christ becomes present wherever someone fully assumes His thought and His heart—where a man or a woman rejects lies, intrigue, conspiracy and murder, and decides to love to the utmost.

The Father is in the Son and the Son in the Father; I am in Jesus and Jesus is in me. Any reader may say the same if he or she lives according to that love. Aristotle knew it when, in the *Poetics*, he affirmed that the poet is a “possessed” being—not a madman, but a mouthpiece of the gods. It is within that ancient lineage that I place myself: poet, writer, actor, teacher and academic, I merely lend my voice to God. I am, at once, priest according to the order of Melchizedek—wisdom that reconciles—teacher who harmonises Dionysian vitality with faith in the absolute good, universal prophet who partakes of the various traditions that announced a judge of the living and the dead for this generation. That Judge is terrible only for the wicked who rule the world; for the just, He is simply the fulfilment of a long-awaited promise.

The Change

Around 2016, after recounting my mystical experiences in India, a friend recommended a book about a woman who conversed with God. I read it in my customary seclusion, in a room crammed with books and notebooks—a place that has been my voluntary cell for almost all my life. Among its pages I discovered clear hints of my own experience: God spoke to her of a priest of the order of Melchizedek, a teacher sent to reconcile the incongruities between the force of life—Dionysus—and the faith in absolute good—the patriarchal God of monotheistic traditions.

When she asks where this priest is, God replies that he is in a bedroom in South America.

“And what does he do?” she insists.

“Nothing,” God answers.

That “nothing” summarises the accusation society levels against those who devote themselves to study, contemplation and reading. Yet God confides in her that the mission of that man is to teach the world the secrets of immortality and the certainties of our divinity—

I, Petrus Romanus _____

work I had undertaken since 1998, when the Virgin Mary appeared to me in a dream as vivid as these lines, a vision I recount in one of the most extensive poems of *Hymns to Jesus*. From it I quote a few verses:

Hymns to Jesus – Mary, Mother of Those Who Suffer

*And one night, I saw you disconsolate,
With channels marked on your face
From so many tears, from so much weeping.
"Why are you sad?" I asked.*

*"No one believes anymore," you sobbed.
"What can I do?" I asked.
"Read chapter fifteen of Acts."
I woke up with my mind illuminated.*

*"To be Christian, it is enough," they concluded
In Acts of the Apostles fifteen,
Paul and Peter, "not to harm another
And to stop frequenting brothels."*

*My battered beliefs returned,
The garden I loved so much and thought lost,
The oasis that protected me from the floggings
That I suffered for ten years in my childhood.*

*"New Afternoons in Manhattan" was written
By a theologian seeking to define God.
And to Shakespeare's land you led me,
So that they might see me walk its green meadows.*

*There I conversed with its philosophers
And explained that atheism is also Christian
If one acts without intrigue and without malice.
In the end, they asked me to define God.*

Oscar Wilde's phrase resounds in this context: "*There is no duty we so much underrate as the duty of being happy*"—or, rendered more freely,

_____ Hugo Noël Santander Ferreira

"*There is no greater responsibility than to do nothing.*" In post-industrial nations no one would accuse of laziness the one who dedicates his life to reading and thinking; in Colombia, by contrast, intellectual leisure is suspect.

"We do not know," said a neighbour, "what Noël does in his study, locked away six days."

Colombia in 2022 continues to appear to the rest of the world as a nation on the brink of civilisation: jungles, civil wars, drug traffickers. Globalisation has granted it representation, yet its irruption on the international stage is as strange as the arrival of an embassy of the Yellow Emperor—through enchanted mirrors—into the universe of *Star Wars*.



I, Petrus Romanus_____

I write these lines on 29 August 2023, when I have already pronounced my first condemnations. The most beneficial for Colombia was that dictated against the violent, condemning them to fail in their attempts against the innocent and to suffer the very demons they invoke; to die in the same circumstances they desire for their neighbours. Such condemnations form the volume *The Final Judgement*, where I anticipate the fall of violence in Colombia through a divine decree:

The Divine Judgement: Condemnation of the Murderers in Colombia

*For decades, Lord, God gave you faithful shelter,
your weapons were not false, you suffered injustice;
but you abused the divine privilege with contempt,
altering sacred words,
calling Jesus violent
because He scourged a band of thieves (...)*

*From today,
whoever fires upon another shall lose his life.
From today,
whoever plans to kill shall seal his own fate.*

*From today,
whoever wishes death upon Abel
shall meet his own demons
with no possibility of escape.*

*Your prayers to hell shall be vain,
without echo or power;
pacts with the Devil shall not save you,
you shall not flee from the God of gods.*

*To the Prince of Darkness, I deliver your souls,
to the Angel of Death I entrust your hours.
Your limbs shall grow still
when you touch your knife or your gun;*

_____Hugo Noël Santander Ferreira

*before using blades,
you shall bite the dust in alarm.
Thus I bless Colombia,
its territories,*

*the nation I love,
cradle of the gentle Prophet;
and I reiterate the curse pronounced by my Son,
which Petrus Romanus obeyed:*

*Whoever kills with iron, by iron shall perish.
It is the justice that shall shake his house,
it is the justice that shall shake his city,
it is the justice that shall shake Colombia,*

*it is the justice that shall shake the world.
And the good news of the coming
of the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth.*

Colombia is, to paraphrase Swift, a nation of seers who deny what they see for fear that Europeans will call them aborigines. Psychology faculties are closed while it is proclaimed that engineers are more useful than psychologists. Thus, the country is categorised as second-rate in matters of mental health.

For the great powers it is crucial to control, in peripheral nations, journalists, playwrights and any artist who leads the reader to the spiritual plane—to the authentic individual capable of saying no to the majority’s mindset, the enlightened citizen of Kant, accuser of injustice without fear, skilled at unmasking liars with arguments and protecting his community from the evils that afflict it.

As in the days of Noah, the majority sacrifices its compassion for two selfish coordinates:

A) earning money dishonestly,

and

B) gaining power by deceiving others.

The presence of God in the destiny of the world, however, has always been recognised by the leaders of the great powers. All that chatter about the non-existence of God is written for the masses enslaved by their own priests, university professors and subsidised intellectuals. Their favourite trick is to caricature God as a bearded old man before refuting Him. Intellectuals such as Dawkins will never be prepared to accept Him as an invisible force of love and goodness.

Dawkins was refuted effectively by Gerardo Remolina S.J., my former professor of existentialism, with whom I corresponded before his debate with the biologist at the Universidad Javeriana in 2017. The arguments he employed I had previously expounded in a chapter of my metaphysical treatise *Being God*.

The powerful—though they deny it in public—know that God exists; their advisers dust off with severity the warnings of ancient prophets who remind them that the Universe inclines towards the ascendancy of the just, the saints and the martyrs, so that truth, justice and love may finally be respected.

The time of fear, hypocrisy and intrigue dissolves, dear readers. Nothing and no one will prevent the weak from raising their voices against the injustice of the powerful. The conspirators already tear their hair, lamenting not having heeded the warnings of heaven, for in the Final Judgement they shall be accused by the dead returning from their graves. They will attempt to flee by taking their own lives, but God will force them to behold the unmasking of their lies and their humiliation before all humanity.

As at the end of every war, their salvation will depend on the promptness with which they recognise the victor. What is just is that they abandon their attacks and censorship this very day; that they allow the media to address my writings, to let them shine before philosophers, celebrities and film stars. The conspirators of goodwill shall repent, becoming, like Paul of Tarsus, converts before the overwhelming reception of the era of sincerity and understanding.

Of Learned Ignorance

When the stream becomes a ravine and the ground trembles beneath our feet, we know we draw near to the river of life's responsibilities. Only an elite—fifteen per cent of the population—

continues its studies beyond that point. University students train for years until the day of their graduation.

Then the path of knowledge enters a virgin jungle where many professionals abandon the search for truth in order to marry, have children and prosper on firm ground. The bolder—barely nine per cent—continue with caution. At some point the path sinks into the porous sand of the desert, and there they discover an inscription in golden letters carved upon a marble plaque:

SUM EST NIHIL,
VERITAS NON EST

Which translates as:

I AM NOTHING,
THE TRUTH DOES NOT EXIST

Modern sophists, ignoring the refutations that Socrates and Plato formulated two and a half millennia ago against the mercenaries of knowledge, quote Nietzsche to exhaustion in order to establish themselves in the age of the lie. Neo-Nietzschean professors claim that truth is a product of educated and powerful elites and that it is no longer necessary to attend to consensuses about what is true, but only to inequalities between rich and poor. Ignoring ecological wisdom—there will always be lions and lambs, elephants, hippos, herons and zebras—they proclaim that economic diversity does not exist and that all shall be equal.

But when regimes emerge that scorn consensuses about truth—in Nicaragua, Cuba, Venezuela—we see that they too employ janitors, bootblacks and labourers who treat the new demagogues as kings, reproducing the same hierarchies that exist in all animal species. What these sophists have achieved is not justice, but the undermining of wisdom, study and poetry as sources of social knowledge, in order to establish the law of the strongest: the one who enjoys the greatest backing of the violent. Thus Bolsheviks, Castroite soldiers and Venezuelan military backed by Cuban intelligence have seized and retained power.

In the end, some of these seekers receive diplomas certifying them as doctors—barely five per cent. Their merit, it is said, is having

renounced their religious beliefs and replaced them with those of the exact sciences, anthropology, biblical exegesis and historical criticism.

It was the text of a cantata by Bach, No. 147, which I not only listened to but also sang while learning German, that reconciled me with Jesus—the friend I already considered, although close, a closed chapter of my life. Years of instruction with professors who mocked the Roman religion and exalted the virtues of atheistic existentialism had distanced me from absolute faith in love. I had not lost my beliefs: I had hidden them in the most remote corner of my mind, like a childhood secret no longer confessed.

In Bach I found the friend I longed for, the sensitive and inspired soul who, from his solitude, said to me: “Do not fear loving Jesus. He is your greatest good, even if your acquaintances mock you and wound your heart.”

Jesus bleibt meine Freude

*Meines Herzens Trost und Saft,
Jesus webet allem Leide,
Er ist meines Lebens Kraft,
Meiner Augen Lust und Sonne,
Meiner Seele Schatz und Wonne;
Darum lass ich Jesum nicht
Aus dem Herzen und Gesicht.*

Which I translate thus:

*Jesus remains my joy,
the comfort and sap of my heart.
Jesus heals all my suffering,
He is the strength of my life,
my eyes, my strength, my sun,
the treasure and delight of my soul.
For this reason I shall never leave Jesus,
though they wound my heart.*

Today I read that the last line translates literally as “from my heart and from my face”, but in my memory I retain the phrase “though they wound my heart”. I now know that beauty—the Holy

Spirit—embellishes the poet’s memory with time. Or perhaps that was, indeed, what I read.

My search for truth continued along paths beyond universities: theatre, cinema, poetry, fantasy literature, horror and science fiction. I finished my degree in social communication, but the doors of the major media outlets closed one by one due to my reputation for always telling the truth.

I completed a diploma in screenwriting at the Colegio Mayor de Nuestra Señora del Rosario. The cost was high, but we were promised—with photos and press announcements—that in the end Caracol TV would produce our feature films. At the end of the first semester, we learned that it had all been yet another deceptive advertising campaign. My final script, *The Tabárez*, a black comedy about a family who owns a funeral home, still sleeps in those archives.



I began a doctorate in philosophy with the firm purpose of understanding God through reason, but the crisis of the nineties led me to the United States, where I studied history, the arts and cinema until 1998. My greatest strength was stillness, the certainty of the eternity of my Being.

Divine Protection

As Morris West's novel *The Clowns of God* shows, if God sends a prophet, the first organisation to attack him will be the Inquisition of the Vatican. Its leaders resent not having received the powers of heaven, both visible and invisible. They believe it to be a power *at will*, as the world describes it; in reality, it is a form of solidarity: a protection. It is the same potency that the Renaissance thinkers called *Fortuna*. For those who admire Leonardo, I shall say, as he did, that I have been favoured by the Goddess Fortuna.

Some critics fear that I overstep the limits of Jesus, who drew the line between the servants of God and those of the Devil. They forget that Christ died and triumphed over the demons; He does not kill them—they do not fear death—He redeems them. Like Caliban, the demon in the service of Prospero in *The Tempest*, all demons serve Jesus when He requires it.

Since the Lord granted me all His blessings in Chennai, His powers have protected me. And, as is proper for the Saviour and for God Himself, that protection extends to all who are persecuted. Just as a father distinguishes his children by their goodness or wickedness, while a mother loves them alike, so the Creator applies both precepts: crime and punishment, destruction and construction, life and immortality.

Whoever does not fear death and entrusts himself to God receives, in a certain sense, the universe. Without refuting the widespread fear of death imposed by the Media, Paulo Coelho has written something similar from a secular language, stripping it of explicit references to Catholicism so it may be heard by an audience weary of Rome and its popes distracted from the spirit.

Second Mystical Experience: Our Lady of Fátima

I continued studying in cafés, on park benches and in churches, immersed in reading—which is also meditation—amending my behaviours and rethinking my routine. Thus, I arrived in Oporto, where I studied theology while teaching cinema classes. I lived only a few hours by train from Fátima and told my then wife, an atheist, that

I would walk on my knees the one-kilometre path that precedes the altar.

Being Colombian, I could not fail to perform that penance for my country, then scourged by almost daily massacres. The journey was more painful than expected; I did not take any padding for my knees, only shorts, and the skin grazed away until later, like any abrasion, it grew back. That penance, strangely, converted my French and Cartesian ex-wife to Catholicism. She herself was surprised by how it happened: almost without noticing, as though grace had entered in silence.

A few days later I had a mystical experience with the Virgin Mary, already described in another chapter. That vision transformed the novel I was then writing, *New Afternoons in Manhattan*, into the spiritual quest of an emigrant who seeks to define God. Writing a novel is also discovering the essence of reality. Seven years later, the British philosopher Martin Cohen asked me to define God for the encyclopaedia *The Essentials of Ethics and Philosophy* by Hodder Education, published by Oxford University Press.

While writing that definition in my small apartment on Harroby Street in London, my first wife had a sudden vision and told me that one day multitudes would come in droves to buy that book for the definition of God it contains. My yearning for knowledge would lead me from nation to nation until I attained, in 2011, my half-hour interview with Jesus in Chennai.

A series of miracles—which I shall recount in my novel about Marco Saint-André in Oporto—was unleashed from that penance of crawling a kilometre on my knees in Fátima; the greatest of them was leading us to live and work in Britain for nearly five years. I scarcely suspected then that *Nuevas Tardes En Manhattan (1999)* was already awakening the wrath of the Inquisition for my denunciations against paedophiles.

In 2012 I went to the Abbey of Saint Anthony, near Pittsburgh, to recount my mystical experiences as a prophet and to become a monk. They bade me farewell with great cordiality, but from the beginning I was watched by the Vatican because of my visions. It was there, at the convergence of various revenges, that the protection of the universe became most visible.

All conspiracies against a just man fail through an accumulation of accidents that seem abnormal: a queen dies before signing a

sentence against me; an operations centre in Tampa is devastated by a hurricane; a terrorist attack in Hyderabad saves me from being executed; a hitman fires three times and misses. The protection that Fortune affords the righteous alters the postulates of the mathematics of chaos, incapable of factoring in the divine. Agents of indescribable powers who attacked me brought illness and death upon their own relatives.



March 01, 2003

THE CRISIS OF ATHEISM (2003)

From *The Philosopher*, Volume LXXXIX No. 1 Spring 2001



When Genghis Khan intended to exterminate the Chinese, a Mandarin persuaded him that his people would submit to his service without hate.

THE CRISIS OF ATHEISM

By Hugo Santander

“Why?” they ask.

Our earthly paradise is the family—that circle of friends and pets whom we love and who love us. But that paradise can make us selfish and aggressive. Paradise must expand to include all families, the entire earth. Exclusive attachment to one’s own family is, as the Buddhists explain, one of the greatest evils, for a family can become a mafia, a centre of intrigues against innocents perceived as obstacles. The rebellion of adolescents against such abuses of power has contributed to the crisis of the family model in the twenty-first century.

The family’s economic power has also diminished; grandparents with twelve children scarcely exist anymore. On the other hand, the

mandate to obey parents has been used, in extreme cases, to justify blows, humiliation and abuse. As I once said to a mother: with what moral authority do you demand submission from an adult child whom you systematically beat and humiliated during his childhood?

Atheism as a Secular Creed

I devoted myself to studying the mystical works of Swedenborg and Böhme and wrote my essay *The Crisis of Atheism*³, published in England by *The Philosopher*. Its warm reception led me afterwards to define God Himself. I was on the verge of abandoning the path of knowledge and accepting a stable future as a salesman at Harrods Knightsbridge, but the biblical precepts internalised within me strengthened me, and I rejected—as I had already done in the United States—that temptation.

I returned to Colombia. In Bucaramanga I fought new conspiracies and lies. I was entrusted with the subject of Ethics, which shaped the philosophical direction of the Faculty of Audio-visual Arts at a provincial university. I had to confront intrigues of those who put cunning before truth and repeated that truth does not exist, not even ethical certainty. I wished nineteen students to film a feature-length film in a single semester, as I had done with *Hamlet of America* and later with *Corrupt Colombia* and *Marriage at First Sight*, but envious teachers and administrators at UNAJ sabotaged the project, heedless of the harm caused to the young.

The Lord continued protecting me in secret. My shield was to practise—and intensify—the teachings of Jesus:

Love your enemies more than yourself, so that, if they wish to improve their lives, they may find in you a reason to love you.

My love of knowledge led me to neglect domestic life, and some French relatives turned their affection into animosity when they saw that I did not accumulate wealth.

The First Attack: Dividing My Family

³ Santander Ferreira, H. N. (2001, March 1). The Crisis of Atheism. *The Philosopher*, LXXXIX(1). Retrieved from <http://www.the-philosopher.co.uk/2001/03/2003-2.html>

Because she was unable to obtain a properly paid job in Colombia, Michelle, my first wife, travelled to France, promising to bring me to live with her if she found work; but as soon as she did, her mother and stepfather persuaded her to divorce me. The French secret police also took part in the plot, for they had information that I was under the eye of MI6 since my miraculous escape from a planned assassination on 7–7–05, as I described in an earlier chapter.

Michelle preferred to secure her life rather than run the risk of being killed by the British, as she told me in secret, dedicating to me a final song before her departure: *Demasiado Corazón*, by Willie Colón—the story of a woman who chooses to end her marriage to save her life and her husband’s.

I wrote one poem each day after her announcement of divorce for twenty-three days—sonnets published in 2023 under the title *The Love that Edmond Dantès Lost*, in which the muse Erato compares my fate to that of the Count of Monte Cristo.

Her fears were not unfounded, for the heaviest burden of my persecutions would fall upon my beloved Leyla, who suffered four losses induced by the most fearsome conspiracies of the CIA, the Vatican and international socialism—a theme of my book of poems *In Persecutione Extrema*.

In Persecutione Extrema – After the Storm

*Our home is now a holy field,
Clouds, like corpses, inhabit it,
Our shadows conceal their graves.*

*Little bodies that Leyla and I loved
Only to see them die in our arms.
There they grow, play, laugh and wander,
Far from their inconsolable parents.*

*Tears that God or chance decreed
Dim the pleasures of the world.
Nothing so strong as these wounds
To help us understand, to help us love,
To survive, to dream and to await
This home of the absent heaven.*

After my divorce the Lord sent me to work in India. The adventures I lived in France, Holland and Spain for three months while waiting to obtain my work visa to travel to India I shall relate in another book.

India’s bureaucrats procrastinated indefinitely over my application, until I turned to the Virgin of the Miraculous Medal in Paris. Her help was immediate; I obtained my visa stamped on the very day of my birthday, 10 November 2010.

Later I learned that some Hindus at SRM University in Chennai were conspiring so that I would not obtain the visa. They were so astonished at the miracle that the Hindu administrator in Madras asked me to send him my scanned documents to verify their authenticity. Now I know that they too were conspiring to prevent my arrival.

Arrival in India, 2011

The city of Chennai was until recently called Madras (“City of the Mother of God”), and it was the port where, centuries ago, the Apostle Saint Thomas arrived to preach the Gospel of Christ. His labour converted thousands of Hindus, which aroused the jealousy of the local priests.

It was a Brahmin, according to the locals, who thrust a spear into Saint Thomas. On the site where the Apostle drew his last breath, at the top of a hill, stands a beautiful chapel, and in the city centre stands the world’s third cathedral containing relics of one of Christ’s Apostles; the other two are the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela—which I also visited in 1998—and Saint Peter’s in Rome.

In India, as in medieval Spain, all the world’s religions live together in peace, as I witnessed by attending weddings of other faiths.

The angels of the Lord prepared my dwelling in a concrete desert: a small apartment that had once been an office, at the end of the top floor of an uninhabited tower in a university campus not yet in full operation. At dawn and dusk I heard the gentle Muslim litanies, and every morning from my window I beheld the sky in all its splendour. In thanksgiving to the Lord, I observed the repaired tower of a Hindu temple consecrated to Lord Murugan.

Days after feeling the love of Christ in my chest, I pondered knowledge and, faithful to an ancient philosophical tradition, concluded that I would never be able to acquire true knowledge in this life. From my voluntary seclusion I longed for the day when I would depart and go to the Kingdom that Jesus promised us. “Then,” I said to the Lord, “I shall know all the secrets of Being: Why do we come? Where do we go? Where do all our experiences remain?”

The Gift of the Holy Spirit: Wisdom

On the night of 15 May 2011, while walking in my room, my mind received the impact of a ray of light—or rather, of wisdom. It was an instant that cannot have lasted more than a minute, yet it expanded into a subjective eternity. I felt a sharp pain in my chest and, at the same time, an immense joy. I could scarcely breathe; my knees gave way and I ended up kneeling, doubled over, as though the body were too narrow to contain that torrent.

I saw no colours or symbols, nor did I hear words. Everything was feeling and understanding. The barred doors of knowledge opened and I glimpsed clearly the structure of the universe, the origin and reason for evil, and the final supremacy of good. The impression was not only intellectual but emotional: waves of exalted happiness followed by terrible anguish, as though my soul had to traverse both extremes to sustain the vision.

The image of the wave was revealed to me as the key to all existence. Those who live fully are not those who avoid pain, but those who, accepting it, choose long waves of self-giving that yield, in the end, greater happiness. I understood that every human being, every animal, every insect is in reality the same Being who denies Himself through forgetfulness in order to be reborn.

The river Lethe and the Styx of the Greeks precede every existence, but they erase not only the previous life: they erase all the memories and knowledge accumulated by the Being. In the same way that, when rereading a book in adulthood, we feel again the joy it gave us in adolescence—thanks to forgetfulness—so the Being returns to happiness in every incarnation by forgetting Himself. Forgetfulness is, paradoxically, necessary in order to remain young, to return again and again to childhood.

I beheld that the essence of God is shared by all creatures: we are all the same Being—from God, absolute knowledge, compendium of all creatures, creator of men and destinies, alpha and omega—to the infinite ignorance of Lucifer, whom Dante depicted cold and indifferent in a desolate circle of eternal ice.

God is Lucifer redeemed, and Lucifer is God condemned. Such a precept—which would have sent Böhme or Swedenborg to the stake, and which already pulses in William Blake’s *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*—leads to universal reconciliation. God knows Lucifer and each of His creatures because He has lived, lives and will live in them as an embodied observer. By coming into the world as Jesus Christ, the Being experienced in His flesh human weakness, and in compassion assumed all sins for the redemption of the entire creation.

We, who believed we could create without God’s knowledge, live in time, limited to our partial experiences. As the Upanishads proclaimed, to understand reality is to apprehend what *Is* and what *Is Not*, the One who *Exists* and *Does Not Exist*, the One who *Knows* and *Does Not Know*.

I often use the human body as a metaphor: God is the entire organism, which knows what happens in the foot or in the smallest nail; Satan, by contrast, is the illusion of being an amputated limb that believes it needs no other part. The sinner is the one who has broken his bonds: he no longer loves his wife, nor his children, nor even his dog or his mother. I think of Stalin, who loved not even his own—and of certain leaders who boast of not having raised their children. They consider themselves islands, and that isolation plunges them into the seven deadly sins, which are deadly not because they necessarily lead to mortal sins, but because they isolate us from spirituality and from others.

Whoever understands that he belongs to a family takes a first step; whoever knows himself responsible for his nation, as Swedenborg would say, progresses further; whoever loves all humanity, as Jesus did, attains divine love. And whoever loses fear of death because he understands that he is immortal becomes completely free. The resurrection of Christ is no pious metaphor but a fact; thanks to that fact there exist men like me who follow His footsteps.

Without Jesus I would not have reached this certainty; doubt would remain. He gave it to me when I was His apostle—the first to recognise Him as the Son of God—although then my faith was not as absolute as I would have wished and I denied Him three times.



That sin accompanies me as a reminder of my human condition, but also as proof that repentance and return are possible. In this generation I have returned to show how far a man's faith may go. The night of the ray of wisdom condensed that and the infinite. I could transcribe

that revelation into several volumes; here I merely sketch what is essential. Many of its ideas culminate in my book *Being God*. I thanked the Lord for the knowledge granted, not knowing that in the days to come I would be tested by the egoism, arrogance and vanity of the world. But that is a story for another chapter.

6. My struggle against the Antichrist

On the morning of 16 April 2011, I awoke with a certainty as gentle as the brush of a breeze upon the forehead: I had to write it all down. Every defeat the world celebrated, every triumph the powerful silenced, every fall and every resurrection without witnesses. I did not hear an articulated voice nor a dictated message; I felt something more intimate, something as my own as breath.

An inner light, scarcely hinted at, showed me that my life had never consisted of a scattered sequence of journeys, plays, ignored films and clandestine books. Everything formed an architecture. An arch. A constellation whose design could only be understood from that instant of lucidity.

Flashes began to ignite in my memory, as if angels were playing with mirrors in the penumbra of my recollections. I saw clearly that the supposed defeats corresponded to secret exploits; the exiles, to missions. In every city where I believed myself a shadow, I was in truth acting as a hidden protagonist of the world, yet fully visible before God. Bogotá, Manchester, Philadelphia, Porto, Bishkek, Bucaramanga, Chennai: each one functioned as a station in a vaster battle, a spiritual war whose visible adversaries represented little more than puppets of the true enemy.

That enemy revealed itself to me as a system of forces: a face without eyes that drives men towards money, fame and power; an eighteen-headed hydra: the Antichrist. I understood that my entire life had been woven as a prolonged struggle against that structure, even before I had named it.

Bucaramanga, the Misfits' Club

I remembered my school years in Bucaramanga. I was hardly more than a boy who wrote verses, directed plays and recruited misfits to form with them a club everyone had written off. The other students predicted we would end last in the annual group competition. We ended in an honourable sixth place. That small miracle—raised with rehearsal, stubbornness and love for

the despised—taught me how God works: He builds victories out of what the world throws into the rubbish bin. The teachers noticed it, and alongside the respect sprouted the envy of those who had staked their lives on grades and prestige. Even then, I intuited that academic prestige operates as one of the tentacles of the Antichrist: a chain promising power at the cost of mortgaging one's soul.

My philosophy teacher, Mauricio Rodríguez, confessed his dismay before a generation intent on becoming ruthless capitalists. Forty years later, I can confirm his foreboding. I have witnessed how many classmates consecrated themselves to that path, while I became the exception who cuts loose from those siren songs.

The Javeriana and the Stage

At the Javeriana I studied Social Communication, a degree that promised success only to models, bodybuilders or well-connected politicians; I pursued it against the advice of my dean, who warned me that my grades would allow me to study medicine or law, careers that guarantee economic well-being. Yet I was certain that my calling was to serve God as a writer.

Instead of cultivating relationships and complicities which, in the words of my lecturer Bernardo Toro, constitute the social function of studying at such a prestigious university, I devoted myself to reading and theatre; my studies later enabled me to stage productions without having completed certified training in theatre.

Thus, I mounted several seasons—Waiting for Godot, Candida, Hermione, The Lesson, Cortés and Moctezuma—at the theatres of the Alliance Française, the León Tolstoi Institute and Skandia, endeavours incomprehensible to those who could not conceive that an unknown young man might be recognised by the public without the endorsement of consecrated cultural circles. Merit and talent were ignored by the Bogotá theatre gurus simply because I refused to bow to their power.

I also inadvertently became their benefactor. I exchanged tickets for free publicity in *El Tiempo*, designed media campaigns with the boldness of one who knows that creativity always surpasses scarcity. The plays were reviewed, commented upon, even imitated. The fashionable actors, dependent on official praise, kept silent. That

silence was eloquent: whoever refuses to submit to the system is expelled from the system. The Antichrist wove his nets against me.

The absence of recognition motivated me to emigrate in search of new adventures.

Philadelphia and Hamlet Unbound

Philadelphia revealed another facet of me as a student at Temple University. There I produced, directed and acted as the main character in the first inter-ethnic cinematic adaptation of Shakespeare, *Hamlet Unbound* (Hamlet of America), with twenty thousand borrowed dollars and a will bordering on recklessness. From an industrial standpoint the feature film lacked viability, yet I brought it to completion. When the film had been edited, the world remained silent.

The world's silence acts as a weapon. Efforts that do not submit to the routes of power are condemned to invisibility. Many viewers—especially in India—could not believe that such a film had been created on such a modest budget; even so, the media preferred to look away. Later the Lord would show me that, meanwhile, each of my works found celebration in the invisible realm, even if on the surface muteness prevailed.

Portugal, England, Kyrgyzstan, Bucaramanga

In Portugal, I wrote and directed a monologue, *Nórida Ocampo's First Date*, and a documentary on Porto's marginal neighbourhoods, *Ilhas do Porto* (2000).

In the United Kingdom, I taught actors with no previous experience how to interpret Shakespeare's texts. I mounted and directed a clever minimalist adaptation of *Timon of Athens*, which proved so successful that a fellow lecturer congratulated me several times, exclaiming, "It's incredible!", something truly exceptional in a Briton.

Unfortunately, the staging aroused jealousy among other members of the faculty, and I was quickly excluded from future presentations.

It was also in Manchester where I managed the publication of my first novel, *New Manhattan Soirées*, in Colombia. A second edition

was released in Barcelona on 23 April 2002 by La Buganville Publishing House.



In England, I edited *Manati: Portrait of an Underdeveloped and Happy Town*, a documentary laying bare Colombian corruption with a clarity permitted only by distance.

In Kyrgyzstan, I refused bribes and confronted those who sought to turn education into the buying

and selling of consciences. My refusal to pass absent students led to divisions, resignations, protests, institutional changes. There a domino effect was unleashed that formed part of the Tulip Revolution, a prelude to the Arab Spring. I was merely a lecturer sent by the Soros Foundation with tacit instructions to tolerate corruption; I chose the opposite.

In Bucaramanga, I directed and produced the first feature film shot in the city, *Colombia Corrupta*. For the first time a film addressed without caution the corruption entrenched across all social classes.

If fame, money or power did not settle in my life, it was due to an early decision. As an adolescent, portraying Ignatius of Loyola at San Pedro Claver School, I uttered on stage the phrase that transformed St Francis Xavier and carried him to India:

“What shall it profit a man to gain the whole world if he lose his soul?”

That question took root in me as an inner vow. I prefer a life without fame, sharing the hardships of the majority of humanity, rather than an existence among vanities and appearances. More than once, lovers of the world have attempted to refute me by quoting Ecclesiastes: “Vanitas vanitatum...”.

They forget that the sacred author describes the emptiness of that which is pursued as the final end, not the fullness that springs from sacrifice offered to God.

That April morning, the Lord showed me that all those episodes formed a single word: battle.

The Numerologist and Meditation

I also remembered a crucial episode from November 2010. At the time I lived at the central campus of SRM University, on the outskirts of Chennai. One afternoon my assigned driver took me to an almost deserted beach beside an empty amusement park. I rode a roller coaster with three young Tamils and, upon disembarking, saw a numerologist and astrologer seated in a wide courtyard before a table with an empty chair. He claimed our meeting followed a design.

The light was fading, and I agreed to let him interpret my numbers in exchange for a few rupees.

“You will travel many kilometres throughout your life,” he said. “Your mind resembles that of an octopus which must work on up to twelve projects at once. An extraordinary teacher, so innovative that you instil fear in your superiors.”

After his diagnosis, he taught me a method of meditation and the way to access others’ thoughts:

“Anyone can question them in their imagination. The magic lies in believing. Believing that one can influence, with reasonable arguments, another’s behaviour.”

Telepathy, I later learned, is common in India. When we meditate, we reach others through the path of imagination. All grace functions as an act of faith, without verifiable proofs. No being in the universe provides empirical evidence that what is imagined is real. Meditation, just like the trust that we shall awaken alive tomorrow, rests upon belief.

That teaching prepared the stage for a greater temptation.

The Mark of the Beast

One night, amid the silence of the deserted campus, an inner proposition arose:

“Do you not wish to found a new religion with your secrets?... People are weary of Jesus. Buddha enjoys greater popularity among your generation. The world asks for a new prophet.”

For a few seconds vanity offered me her caress. Yet my readings and convictions rang like alarm bells. Was I to scorn all the blessings received through Jesus, the Father’s beloved Son, and through His mother, the Virgin Mary, who never failed Him?

“No!” I thought.

In the silence of my room, I repeated:

“My only God is called Jesus Christ, the Saviour. Any gift within me proceeds from Him. Jesus is the Messiah, and He has allowed this final test before blessing me.”

“Lord, let not the Antichrist, the Arian heresy that pierces your clergy in Rome, succeed in drawing me away from You.”

I felt a harmful thought cut like a rope; a temptation suffocated before it became a blaze. Spiritual battle occurs in the secret territory of the mind, and in that invisible place all destinies are decided.

From that resounding “no” I discerned the nature of the Antichrist. He is not reducible to an individual, though concrete individuals embody him. He is not confined to a political system, though he administers all political systems. He is not identifiable with a bank, though he dominates all banks. He acts as a structure, an ideology promising divinity without God: ascension without illumination, dominion without love.

The Antichrist, the Beast of 666, manifests in those who covet money, fame and power and sustain them through blood and conspiracy, accepting the damnation of the soul, as Machiavelli advises in The Prince. The combination of those variables—money, fame, power, control—generates six possibilities for each of the three, according to the hierarchical place appointed to them:

CONTROL	MONEY	FAME	POWER	Antichrist / Worldly Alter Ego
MONEY	1	2	3	6
FAME	1	2	3	6
POWER	1	2	3	6

Children and adults, rich and poor, are manipulated under the illusion of attaining one of the eighteen possibilities ruling this world of falsehood and inequality:

The 18 Aspirations of the World

- 1. MONEY
- 2. MONEY AND FAME
- 3. MONEY AND POWER
- 4. MONEY, FAME AND POWER
- 5. MONEY, POWER AND FAME
- 6. CONTROL OF MONEY
- 7. FAME
- 8. FAME AND POWER
- 9. FAME AND MONEY
- 10. FAME, MONEY AND POWER
- 11. FAME, POWER AND MONEY
- 12. CONTROL OF FAME
- 13. POWER
- 14. POWER AND FAME
- 15. POWER AND MONEY
- 16. POWER, FAME AND MONEY
- 17. POWER, MONEY AND FAME
- 18. CONTROL OF POWER

The World’s Alter Egos

- 1. MONEY: Liliane Bettencourt (L’Oreal shareholder)
- 2. MONEY AND FAME: Masayoshi Son (CEO of SoftBank Group)

3. MONEY AND POWER: Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani (Emir of Qatar)
4. MONEY, FAME AND POWER: Elon Musk (CEO of Tesla and SpaceX)
5. MONEY, POWER AND FAME: Oprah Winfrey
6. CONTROL OF MONEY: KRISTALINA GEORGIEVA (DIRECTOR OF THE IMF)
7. FAME: Beyoncé
8. FAME AND POWER: Barack Obama
9. FAME AND MONEY: Cristiano Ronaldo
10. FAME, MONEY AND POWER: Rupert Murdoch
11. FAME, POWER AND MONEY: Bill Gates
12. CONTROL OF FAME: MARK ZUCKERBERG
13. POWER: Pope Francis I
14. POWER AND FAME: Angela Merkel
15. POWER AND MONEY: Michael Bloomberg
16. POWER, FAME AND MONEY: Xi Jinping
17. POWER, MONEY AND FAME: Carlos Slim
18. CONTROL OF POWER: GEORGE SOROS (Financier of NGOs)

This table functions as a spiritual map. Each combination constitutes a door to the hydra. Whoever crosses those doors with impure intentions becomes a slave of the force that controls them.

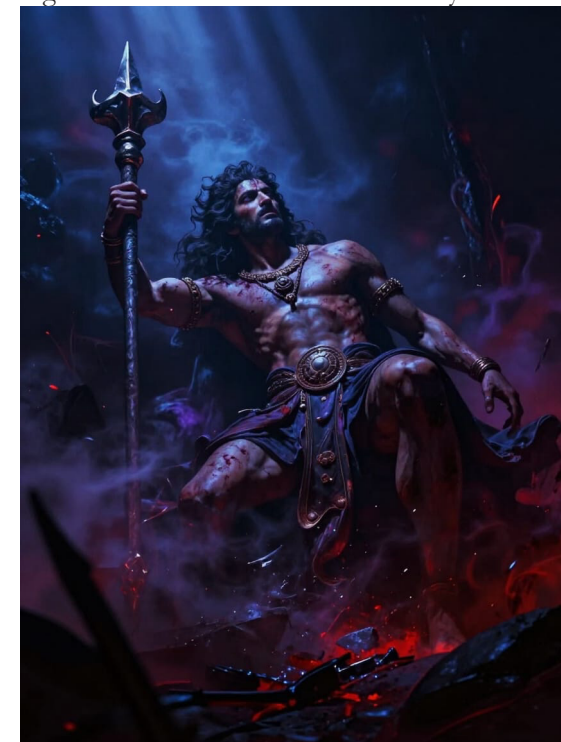
Punishment occurs in one's divine essence, the fruit of spiritual laws: whoever takes sacred fire for destructive purposes ends burned by that same fire. Whoever sets a machine of destruction in motion also activates the machine that dismantles him.

Loki and the Law of Fire

We see this in the tragic fate of Loki.

Alongside his grandfather, Mr Bergrana, Loki was a diligent student of mine, who frequently invited me to his bachelor flat for long conversations. He belonged to an affluent caste in Chennai. At

first they presented themselves as admirers and friends. Yet that inner self which guards all intuitions told me Loki was not to be trusted, much less his grandfather. Were they not members of the political caste that had remained in power for generations? In one of the poems, I wrote about my experience with Jesus, I stated that in India I had gained the friendship of His warriors, yet at knife-edge, as the Upanishads prescribe. For Loki was a warrior, as he confessed one night when he admitted he had already killed a man.



During my stay in India, and later while travelling to other cities, Loki called me frequently, recounting his successes, his prosperity, and how he intended to share it with me, all the more since his grandfather had died, and before dying had made him swear that he would take charge of my “well-being”.

It went so far that in 2021 Loki even asked

me to write a script on how to end the life of Ashwatthama, the immortal. As I wrote, I realised they saw me as Ashwatthama. Before writing the final act I asked him to pay me for my work. He responded with insults and threats of public humiliation.

Months later he died after an agonising illness. His tragic end, like that of his grandfather in 2017, resulted from his hypocrisy towards me—on the one hand accepting my mystical experiences, which I transcribe here, and behind my back mocking them while

plotting my destruction, inquiring into my private life. The pattern is that whenever someone decides to destroy a prophet of God, they activate forces that escape human logic. Whoever throws himself into the blaze of light without purifying his intention is scorched.

Loki later returned, from another sphere, to seek my forgiveness in dreams. He presented himself with a sincerity he never achieved in earthly life. He confessed, sobbing, that adults in his circle—relatives and allies—had pushed him to the front lines, unable themselves to show their faces. He acknowledged they had underestimated the magnitude of the fire they approached: the very sun of the spiritual world.

In the hereafter, audacity against a just man is known to all. Many souls, unwilling to repent, take refuge in their ego and prolong the harm, like so many tyrants: Nero, Hitler, Stalin and others who prefer to lock themselves in their own inner ice rather than accept forgiveness. The Last Judgement resembles a mirror more than a tribunal. God offers mercy; the resistance lies in the soul's inability to accept the light.

Money, Generosity and the Closing of a Cycle

Many claim that wealth, fame or power carry no moral weight. Yet Jesus warns that no rich, famous or powerful person attains divine grace while clinging to attachment. I have lived seasons of prosperity; my usual response consisted of investing resources in others' well-being: theatre productions, films, documentaries that provided bread and work to actors and filmmakers, as well as assistance to friends, gifts, computers given to those who asked.

The Lord shows me now, in 2024, that this cycle ends. With this writing, a stage of indiscriminate generosity closes, for opportunists abound wherever they perceive an available heart.

The current order of the world demands cunning—understood as systematic deceit—to reach those eighteen summits. The one who deceives his colleague, shatters another's hopes and seizes opportunities is rewarded. Mario Puzo cites Balzac in *The Godfather*: “Behind every great fortune there is a crime.”

My diagnosis of the Antichrist and of the web of interests that controls us remains unheard from the mouths of philosophers, priests, imams, rabbis, yogis or gurus. Many desire one of the eighteen

heads; others fear denouncing it for fear of being destroyed. They have already attempted it several times with me, without success.

Only those who trust in God, like me, Hugo Noël Santander Ferreira, look straight at the eighteen heads of the Beast without trembling. Even the Catholic Church was shaken by St Francis of Assisi, who preached poverty as a path to salvation; his voice was heard, and then hypocritically archived.

Thomas, Niraj and Generosity in India

My April–May retreat included two brief journeys. At the end of April, Thomas, a Catholic colleague who received me as a brother, invited me to his home in Kanyakumari, the southern tip of India where the Indian Ocean and the Arabian Sea meet. I spent two days with his parents and siblings; we attended a wedding by the sea.

Niraj learned of this trip from my Facebook photos and reproached me, for I had announced that I would dedicate that time exclusively to meditation. I agreed to accompany him to Pondicherry, a resort of French heritage.

I always treated those friends with generosity I knew was poorly reciprocated. I gave Ponraj a digital camera to photograph his baby. I invited Thomas to lunch so often that he eventually sought me out almost daily, never paying a bill. To Niraj, actor in my super-16mm film *A Shortcut to India*, I gave a computer before leaving Chennai; thanks to that device he was able to contact Tamil film directors and sustain himself as an actor.

Hindu friendship blends loyalty and abuse. As long as one represents a source of help, smiles abound; when the time comes to settle debts, excuses and silences appear.

Joseph, the Pastor, and the Joy of Solitude

Towards the end of May I received an unexpected call from Joseph, a young evangelical pastor whom I had met at the Kattankulathur campus. I remember him preaching in the campus's only Christian chapel, accompanied by young people and maidens.

“I would like to attend your services,” I had told him then.

“Oh, certainly,” he replied, with a voice so distant it discouraged me.

*I, Petrus Romanus*_____

I returned several times; he even gave me his phone number, yet rarely answered. Someone else always seemed to require his attention.

Suddenly, in the midst of my retreat, his trembling voice came through the receiver:

“How are you, Noël? We have remembered you these days.”

I understood the Lord had shown him that this supposed bachelor posed no threat to his flock. My solitude was so filled with divine presence that I preferred to remain isolated.

“I am praying,” I said sincerely.

“Promise me you will call,” he insisted.

“Someday,” I replied.

I have not heard from him again, though I trust our paths will cross once more.

The Visa Odyssey and the Virgin of the Miraculous Medal

My work in India had been offered to me on 1 May 2008 by engineer Ishaan Ramayana, an award-winning mathematician who won a national competition in his youth, obtained a scholarship to Harvard and a position at NASA.

“I admire your work,” he said, referring to my novels, films and essays.

He promised me a deanship in the Faculty of Film and the directorship of a television station. Internal intrigues prolonged the process for two years and downgraded the proposal to an associate lectureship, though still with the possibility of managing the channel.

The family that owns SRM University possesses enormous wealth and power. Vikram, the heir, approved my hiring in the hope that a Western academic and free thinker would forge artists capable of transforming their nation. His father’s friends, resistant to change, conspired to drive me away.

When they finally confirmed the contract at the beginning of August 2010, the conspirators’ first move was to withhold documents indispensable for my work visa. I held a ticket to travel on 10 September, but the Indian embassy in Bogotá refused to issue the visa for lack of certificates. The two-thousand-dollar fare was lost.

I then proposed—thanks to my French citizenship and to the fact that India imposes fewer requirements on French citizens than

_____ *Hugo Noël Santander Ferreira*

on Colombians—to travel to Paris to process the visa. Chennai agreed, and I left at the end of September.



A Chennai Inhabitant Dreamt of Three Faiths United. A Dream the King of Kings Will Bring to Fulfilment with All the Faiths of the World

The day after my arrival I presented myself at the embassy, but the diplomats already had instructions to deny the document.

“It will be issued in one or two months, perhaps longer,” the consul said with a coldness that paralysed me.

I then lived a true test of faith, spending my savings on hotels in Europe. I entrusted myself to the Virgin of the Miraculous Medal. I

threw myself before her sanctuary imploring help. She intervened. The visa was finally issued.

When I arrived in India the semester was expiring; I was granted two months to adapt to the local culture. Faithful to the teaching of a child survivor of Auschwitz, “I learned to love the food until it delighted me.” Today I miss those flavours.

I memorised the Tamil alphabet of 247 signs and essential phrases. They lodged me in a residence for lecturers, beside a beautiful and somewhat kitsch library by Western standards. They observed my habits: reading, writing, an occasional beer, inexpensive raw tobacco. They evaluated my character.

The meeting with Vikram was scheduled for early December. The conspirators intervened once more. My driver was supposed to collect me at three in the afternoon; he disappeared.

“You said to collect you at four,” TV Ishaan argued over the phone.

“The appointment is at four,” I replied.

“Did you not tell me five?” he insisted.

Ponraj, the driver, arrived an hour late.

“Sorry, sir. They sent me to an area with poor signal.”

Fortunately, our friendship was based on sincerity.

“Fly to Chennai,” I told him.

And we flew, taking shortcuts. Even so, I entered the meeting half an hour late. Vikram received me warmly, though he had already spoken for thirty minutes with Rimal, a gentleman from northern India—equivalent to a foreigner in Tamil eyes—selected to direct the television station.

Rimal masters hypnotism. I blush to write it, but India abounds in mysteries that overflow the Western mind. When Vikram asked about my delay and I attempted to denounce TV Ishaan’s ineptitude, my throat closed. I struggled not to cough. An invisible force prevented me from uttering a word. Rimal intervened swiftly, alternating English and Hindi; he reduced me to a mute spectator of my own interview.

After a brief prayer to the Virgin—since then I know how to confront such gurus—I recovered my voice. Vikram asked Rimal whether he wished to have my assistance at the station.

“Of course,” he lied. “Whenever I need him, I will call.”

I returned to my residence knowing that the great promised post was vanishing. I had lost savings and an apartment in Bucaramanga. It would take me five years to recover what I had invested, and yet the contract would end in October.

“How can such perverse souls exist?” I asked the Lord.

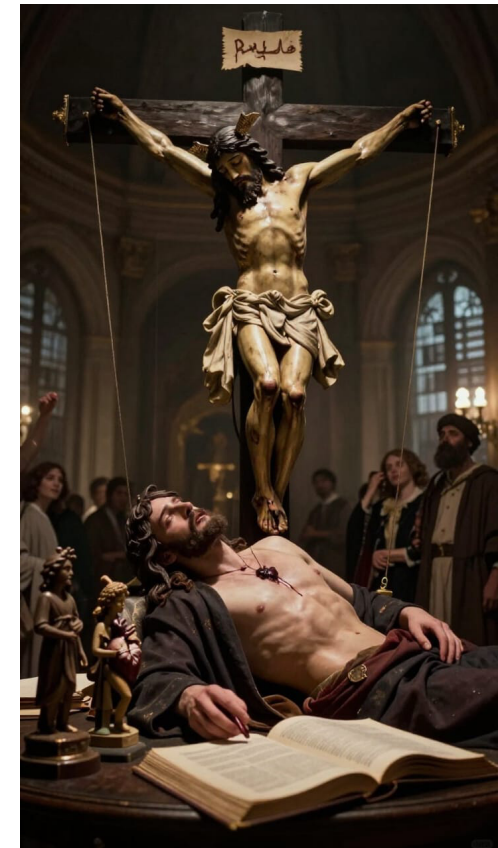
I consoled myself: “At least I knew India.” I recited the verses I had written during my painful stay in Paris:

*If you suffer an
injustice,
Lean your breast upon
Jesus Christ,
Let your tears mingle
with His.*

Kattankulathur turned out to be a village built around the SRM campus, where the Communications Faculty operated. In mid-December I visited the new Chennai campus, home to India’s first university school of film.

“Where would you like to teach?” TV Ishaan asked. “In Kattankulathur or Chennai?”

I chose Chennai without hesitation: the campus lay near studios, cafés, theatres and cinemas. The conspirators, however, sought to minimise my contact with students. At the beginning of the semester, they assigned me an office that was in truth a windowless storage room with no air conditioning and filled with lighting equipment.



Initially they entrusted me with four courses, including documentary. They watched Manatí and deemed it too subversive; they reduced my responsibilities to film direction, film history and screenwriting. In April they left me alone on a deserted campus.

They expected that, bored or maddened, I would abandon India within a month or two. How many men resist four months of near-total confinement? Years later I compared that experience to the story of Aladdin and the magic lamp. A wicked vizier sends Aladdin into a cave in search of a ring. He traps him, condemning him to death. Neither the vizier nor Aladdin imagines that within lies the greatest of gifts.

The same occurred with me. Within the walls of that empty building I discovered the treasure: the consciousness of my mission and the preparation for the visit of the King of Kings.

The Voice of Jesus

Despite having rationalised my beliefs, a growing happiness filled my being, such that I found delight in solitude—or, to use the phrase of St John of the Cross, in my solitude in God.

I prayed for long hours, and wrote incessantly pages of my novels, whose settings leapt capriciously among Bishkek (Kyrgyzstan), London, Manchester, Philadelphia, Porto, Bucaramanga, Chennai and Bogotá.

I cut all communication with the outside world, switched off my mobile and stopped checking emails. I only called the corner restaurant at midday to order my lunch, which I divided into two meals.

At night I reviewed Facebook, where, prompted by friends' problems or joys, I recorded advice inspired by the wisdom the previous month's experience had bequeathed me.

There I discovered the song "Muñeca de Trapo" by La Oreja de Van Gogh. From the first chord it captivated me. As happens with the songs we love, I listened to it over and over. Its lyrics prepared me for a sublime experience I would live in early June. As I listened, I saw with clarity how my writings became fresh red roses blooming from my chest and floating towards their future readers.

I invite the reader to shed prejudices regarding good and evil, religion and atheism, demon and God, imaginary and concrete. We

enter mysteries an ancient Greek would call the rites of Demeter. All poetry acquires a life of its own to adjust to the experience of whoever receives it, as Borges suggested in Pierre Menard, Author of the Quixote.

Years later I understood that the song had been inspired by the divine in a Spanish group so that I would listen to it precisely in those days. Jesus Christ, in His infinite love, was singing to me through that voice. The interpretations in parentheses emerged after years of meditation in light of the events of 2011 and 2012; I keep them here as I wrote them.

Rag Doll

Como esos cuadros que aún están por colgar
(The image of my wounded heart resting upon your wardrobe
Como el mantel de la cena de ayer
(The meals I place upon your table)
Siempre esperando que te diga algo más
(Besides my calls in early April)
Y mis sentidas palabras no quieren volar
(You do not yet perceive that I called you by your name three
times)

Lo nunca dicho se disuelve en un té
(My voice dissolves in the scepticism of your education)
Como el infiel dice nunca lo haré
(They do not wait for me to manifest further in this world)
Siento que estoy en una cárcel de amor
(My unexpressed love for you)
Me olvidarás si no firmo mi declaración
(If I do not speak with articulated voice)

Me abrazaría al diablo sin dudar
(I would break every dogma known about me)
Por ver tu cara al escucharme hablar
(To give you the happiness of hearing me)
Eres todo lo que más quiero
(I love you for your willingness to return to the world)
Pero te pierdo en mis silencios

(I fear losing you to the opinion of the media)

Mis ojos son dos cruces negras
(The world believes I am dead)
Que no han hablado nunca claro
(Because I never explained eternity to them)
Mi corazón, lleno de pena
(My sorrowful Sacred Heart)
Y yo, una muñeca de trapo
(A crucified puppet in whose presence few believe)

Cada silencio es una nube que va
(I suffer for those who suffer for believing in me)
Detrás de mí sin parar de llorar
(For those who lose faith because of my silence)
Quiero contarte lo que siento por ti
(I want to speak with you)
Y que me escuche hablar la luna de enero
(And that the whole world know...)
Mirándote a ti
(...that I chose you)

No tengo miedo al fuego eterno
(I have already conquered death)
Tampoco a sus cuentos amargos
(I forgive unconditionally whoever repents)
Pero el silencio es algo frío
(I know you suffer from my absence)
Y mis inviernos son muy largos
(They remember me only in times of hardship)

Y a tu regreso estaré lejos
(If I do not speak to you, you will cast me away)
Entre los versos de algún tango
(Upon the pages of your novels)
Porque este corazón sincero
(The Sacred Heart of Jesus)
Murió en su muñeca de trapo

(Dies upon paper or wood without the absolute faith of those
who love me)

I discerned that I was meant to write the twelve novels; that my scattered works were chapters of a single epic; that the Lord had placed hidden successes in my life so that my pride would not be inflamed, and visible attacks so that my humility would not weaken. I discerned that my entire story was a training for the true battle: to unmask the faceless man, to expose the hydra that rules the world from the financial, political and media domes.

I already knew that my protection did not come from chance, but from the light, for those who attempt to harm me, upon entering the zone of fire, are burned. The light of goodness purifies those who have prepared themselves for it, but it consumes those who have denied it, in the same way that the light of the sun blinds the slaves of Plato's cave when they step out into the open for the first time. Its purification incinerates those who insist on clinging to their ego.

That is why the assassins who are sent fail before they arrive. That is why those who intrigue fall ill. That is why those who seek to manipulate the light end up being devoured by their own shadow. It is spiritual law.

I ended that April morning with an absolute certainty: I had to tell my struggle.



7. Jesus anoints me as prophet, with the power to judge



On the night of 31 May 2011, while I was writing in the silence of the night, I felt a strong presence in my bedroom. I got up and walked through my spacious flat. I opened the door. Only silence and darkness.

I thought of the rat that had visited me at the beginning of February. One night I woke up and saw the shadow of a tail rising some fifty centimetres up the wall.

When I turned on the light, I caught sight of a grey rodent some thirty centimetres long, thin and elongated, which slipped away under the front door; since my flat was, in fact, a converted office, the gap between the door and the threshold was some five centimetres, enough space for that little creature to squeeze through.

I placed some cardboard sheets and went back to sleep. But when I woke up, the cellulose had been shredded by the paws of my visitor. It was obvious that it had shared my sleep with me.

The next day, at my faculty, I commented on the incident to my superiors and asked them where I could buy poison.

'You are not planning to kill Lord Ganesha's pet, are you?' they said to me in horror. 'A rat does no harm if you leave it food on a plate. It means that there is a god visiting you.'

Now I wonder whether they expected that, as a foreigner, I would abandon my room in terror; they had already told me of Westerners who left India overnight, unable to endure its customs.

I reasoned that if they had lived with all kinds of animals for centuries, I too could do so.

But after two nights in its company I decided that although I could respect its life, I could also ask it not to invade my dwelling.

So I bought a sheet of cardboard and pressed it down with the leg of my bed until it became a solid mass; I then wedged it between both sides of the doorframe, over the threshold.

The door opened and closed against a solid surface. When I woke up the next day and opened the door, I discovered deep scratches on that compacted sheet. Lord Ganesha's pet, unable to cut through the compacted cardboard, had given up visiting me, not without leaving its mark first.

But let us return to the night of 31 May 2011. Despite my search along the corridors of that building, I found no sign of rats. In those days only one person entered that campus, guarded by watchmen: the courier who brought my meals once at midday, with prior authorisation at the gate. I regretted the absence of Lord Ganesha's pet.

'With nothing to eat it left the building,' I concluded before returning to my room.

I went back to writing and an immense feeling of fulfilment flooded me. The happiness I had already been experiencing since the beginning of April had grown as the days passed.

Before my retreat I had bought yellow, red and green dhotis in the street, seized by a sudden impulse to wear the age-old garments of dyed cotton that Tamil labourers wore in the fields.

In them I felt, after my mystical experiences, that I dwelt in paradise in some remote age, in the constant company of my Lord

Jesus Christ, and that I could wait until August, or even until eternity, in my solitude in Him.

I wrote tirelessly, not only my novel but also my cinema manual, based on my studies and on the notes and research from my classes over twenty years: Aesthetics and Ethics of Cinema.

Barely five days earlier, possessed by such bliss, I had taken some selfies (at that time the selfie was not so popular) and some photographs in front of my mirror. They are not the best in aesthetic terms, but my face preserves the joy that ennobled me during those days.



I walked through my room and clearly perceived the presence of the writers who had taught me so much throughout my life: Bernard Shaw, Shakespeare, Samuel Beckett.

I smiled with satisfaction at what I considered a flight of my imagination, and greeted them one by one with a handshake; behind them appeared Socrates and, further on, Plato.

I greeted Dante and Virgil, Racine and Edward Gibbon, Wilde, Joyce and Foucault.

They all congratulated me on having reached my goal.

It was, in truth, a celebration. Why? I asked myself, and at once I knew that they were applauding the conception of my work. That experience was the inspiration for my Auto de fe The Symposium of Arcadia, a theatre-text staged in Eden, in which forty of the men and

women who marked the course of history, literature and philosophy present the audience with proof of their immortality.

At last I felt exhausted and lay down.

In my dream someone told me that difficult times would come, but that, after the sea shaken by a tsunami, my books would be like a tidal wave that would destroy the bad conscience of men.

The next morning I awoke very calm and carried on writing.

It was a hot Wednesday, the first of June.

I was listening to music, as was my custom, when suddenly,



around eleven in the morning, I felt the overpowering need to listen to Tomás Luis de Victoria's Requiem.

That music transported me back to 1996, when, as a film student in Philadelphia, I had undertaken the tour de force of writing a 190-page script in English about the life of a prophetess under the reign of Philip II in Spain.

In one of its scenes I had included the singing of Victoria's Mass for Eternal Rest, one of the summits of a cappella music

worldwide.

I raised my eyes and noticed a cloud that began at the lintel of my window and reached to infinity, a white carpet stretching from my ceiling to the highest point in the firmament.

The Stairway of Clouds: A Geometric Revelation

That heavenly stairway at first seemed to be a whimsical formation of water vapour, but its shape possessed a mathematical precision that defied any meteorological explanation. It rose at an angle of approximately five degrees above my window, only just wide enough for someone to descend along it, and projected itself upwards in an almost straight line towards the zenith of the sky.

It did not fan out to conquer the whole horizon, as an ordinary cloud driven by the winds would do; rather, it maintained its disciplined narrowness, its virginal whiteness standing out against the perfect blue of that dry midday in Chennai. It was one in the afternoon, and the sky displayed that atmospheric purity which can only be found on exceptional days, without humidity, when clarity is absolute.

The stairway—because that is how my mind perceived it, although it had no visible steps—formed a perfect white line that emerged just above the roof of my building, stretching upwards with both delicacy and firmness. I could not see its end; it lost itself into the blue vastness, reaching towards a destination my sight could not attain but which my spirit recognised.

‘A stairway to heaven,’ I thought.

‘A stairway to heaven,’ I thought.

I went back to writing when, suddenly, I felt a fluttering in front of my window.

I got up and saw white doves which, beating their beautiful wings, were hovering in the air.

I thought they were watching me with their beady eyes, but no, they were looking at something or someone behind my back. I turned round and saw nothing. Perplexed, I walked forward through my room.

The Voice of the Lord and the Certainty of Immortality

And then I heard in my mind a clear voice that paralysed me: ‘For your love of my precepts for forty years,’ he said, ‘I anoint you as a prophet.’

The deepest part of my being, that region which reason cannot reach but love can, recognised with immense joy the presence of my Lord Jesus Christ and, kneeling, I fell to the floor, where I felt the immense love of God.



‘And I grant you all my blessings, with authority to judge the living and the dead,’ he continued.

‘Why me, Lord?’ I asked, shaken. ‘I am a sinner!’

The fear of every writer, from adolescence onwards, is that of judging his characters, who are necessarily based on the relatives, friends or

enemies he or she has known throughout life.

Already then I had had problems with certain acquaintances as a result of the publication of *Nuevas tardes en Manhattan* (*New Manhattan Soirées*), for they argued that I portrayed them as cruel individuals.

I now recall Borges’s essay on Dante, who undertook the task of judging all the living and the dead, from the ancient Greeks and Hebrews to his contemporaries. Borges suggests that such a mission would entail possible eternal damnation.

I am now convinced that Dante too had an experience with his divinity that enabled him to judge in his writings those he had known, whether in person or through their conversations and texts.

‘I do not judge you by your acts,’ he told me, applying the wisdom that had moved me three weeks earlier, ‘I judge you by the intentions of your heart.’

I could not see him, but I felt his presence before me, like that of the most loving friend who sees all and understands all.

I felt that he was offering me his hand so that I might get up and sit on my bed.

I did so, and understood that he would converse with me.

At the same time I knew that it would be for half an hour.
My joy was indescribable. Thick tears ran down my cheeks. The Lord then calmed me by flooding me with joy.
‘What do you want to ask me?’ he said.
‘Why me?’ I repeated, moved.

The Recounting of the Intentions of the Heart

He told me that he knew all the tribulations I had suffered throughout my life because of my faithfulness to his precepts of honesty, transparency and love for the disadvantaged. And I remembered that I had always sought to help, in my classes, those most lonely and despised.

‘I was with you when you suffered as a child,’ he said, referring to my early years, before and after the death of my little sister.

And he showed me that he had saved me from death on several occasions: when he brought me back after I had died falling from a moving lorry at the age of eight; when he held me in his hands so that I would not fall from a wall on the outskirts of the Church of El Socorro at twelve; when he healed me of a blow to the skull that kept me bedridden for two months at fifteen; when he made disappear individuals who wanted to stab me in the middle of the night in a deserted street in Porto at thirty-one; when my enemies plotted for me to suffer a car accident at forty-one.

And he watched me with pride, he went on, when at eighteen I walked out of a meeting of conspirators who intended to destroy the life of a young man whom, they said, had betrayed their secret excesses in Bogotá.

He saw me paying my actors what we had agreed, after a badly negotiated theatre season, sacrificing my own gain; he saw me forgiving in Paris those who in Bucaramanga had hurt me, helping them when no one else could help them anymore; he saw me marrying a woman who wanted to escape to Portugal from her mother’s home, simply to mend a heartbreak which, he told me, I had caused her; and he also saw me suffering her abandonment, in silence, without resentment, in Bucaramanga; he saw me humiliated by perfidious bureaucrats in India and saw me avoid hurting a friend by taking him to Pondicherry.

At that moment I recalled what had happened in my school during my adolescence. We used to play, my classmates and I, at telling each other our faults with total sincerity. Each one received his verdict: ‘This one is cruel’, ‘this one is ambitious’, ‘this one is selfish’. When they came to me, their conclusion was surprising and unanimous: ‘He is far too kind, you are far too generous and people take advantage of you.’

That is what the Lord meant when he told me that he judged me by the intentions of my heart. My whole life had been guided by that inner impulse towards goodness which my own teenage companions had identified, and which the world had so often exploited for its own benefit.

‘And what about sex?’ I asked, referring to the fleeting relationships I had had since my divorce.

I feared that I had overstepped the bounds of the trust the Lord was granting me.

‘It must not be sought out,’ he told me. ‘You have harmed no one; in your relationships you have been sincere. When it happens without malice it is by consent. Goodness and cruelty coexist in all worlds, and it is the former that receives my blessings.’

Such wisdom was divine, for all wisdom is, as Homer and Plato taught, divine. It is not sex, nor the moralism that contaminates it, that destroys the souls of men and women, but the thirst for power, money and fame; a precept that sheds light on the Gospel passage in which Jesus foretells that prostitutes are closer to the Kingdom of Heaven than the rich, the famous and the powerful.

‘Take me with you!’ I begged him. ‘I no longer want to live in this world! There is too much trickery, greed, envy and selfishness. I am not happy here!’

‘You do not know how much it pains me that you are not with me,’ he said, with a sadness that shook me. ‘But you must write all the battles you have fought and are going to fight, for the knowledge of the world, and as a testimony to the happiness that I secretly grant to those who keep my precepts.’

His loving words— ‘You do not know how much it pains me that you are not with me’—shaped my absolute faith in Him and in immortality, of which I had always borne witness, earning the resentment of my colleagues and superiors at the universities where I had studied and worked. The Lord confirmed to me with his very

presence that those who err are those who cling to positivist or materialist dogmas which prescribe that immortality and God must



be demonstrated as what they are not, by virtue of their very spiritual nature: facts demonstrable in purely material terms.

Immortality is a certainty that dwells in those of us who keep good intentions in our hearts. It is logical that a world so skilled in lies and conspiracies should reject eternity. God is the cause and end of immaterial essences such as truth, purity, goodness, love, justice and discernment. To believe in our immortal soul is to

bear witness to the certainties of the Sermon on the Mount.

‘Do not write for your contemporaries, but for generations yet to come, as testimony to the power that well-intentioned hearts exert over evil on this earth.’

My tribulations took shape as what I had always believed them to be: necessary trials within a divine plan that had been entrusted to me before my birth.

‘Do not think of this world as something burdensome, for you are fulfilling a mission, and it is the mission I have entrusted to you, and you are doing it well.’

The Forges of Toledo and the Destiny of My Books

And he went on with so many beautiful precepts that I could not absorb them all, enraptured as I was by my epiphany with Christ. However, everything he said to me I gradually remembered and recovered in the days that followed. In particular, when I sat down the next day to compose pages of my novels, his gentle voice reminded me:

‘And you will forge your life in the forges of Toledo so that they may know that we exist.’

His reference to the forges of Toledo indicated to me that I should first polish it in my mother tongue, Spanish.

The forges of Toledo: the perfect image of the Toledo sword, the finest ever forged in the history of the West. In this case, the Lord was referring to the Spanish language as that sword which was to be forged in the purifying fire of the most refined Castilian.

The best-forged Spanish is that of Saint Teresa of Jesus, of Saint John of the Cross, of Fray Luis de León, and even of Quevedo and Cervantes. These are idioms in which the presence of God is very strong, in which every word has been weighed on the scales of eternity before being fixed on the page.

The comedies and tragedies of Lope de Vega, Calderón de la Barca and Tirso de Molina are also part of that treasure, although today they are somewhat forgotten because people say that God no longer exists. But that is false. And I have come once more to prove it with this text which I have forged over so many years.

Thus I gave up the tour de force of presenting my mystical books in English or French, following the example of Samuel Beckett with French in *En attendant Godot*. The Lord entrusted me with a linguistic mission as well as a spiritual one: to restore to Spanish its glory as a language of divine revelation.

I also know that Jesus and the Holy Spirit write with me in each of my books; simply because together we tell a very beautiful story, that of someone who trusted in the goodness of God without yielding to the temptations of the world. And that world, the one that humiliates us, rejects us, persecutes us, had already been portrayed as victorious over the man of good heart, as happens with Myshkin in Dostoevski’s *The Idiot*.

But in the reality that has been and is my life, God shows that, far from the world having its way, He allows it to be me—the honest one, the kind one, the one who always forgives his enemies—who triumphs. Just as the protagonist of Patrick Süskind’s *Perfume* brings calamities down upon those who attack and banish him, so my persecutors have brought upon themselves mishaps and misfortunes throughout their lives, while God grants me blessings that the world does not understand.

When they remove me from a post, saying, ‘You will no longer have a salary to live on,’ what I say is: ‘Lord, and now where are you going to send me?’ And miraculously another job appears, in another country, at another university, in another company, with new opportunities.

No one believes that I have worked in so many countries—Colombia, Portugal, the United States, India, Mexico, England, Kyrgyzstan—without political influence or inherited money, simply through opportunities that arose in an inexplicable way. As a jealous student once wrote to me, he could not understand how I, with a master’s degree, could be so lucky in obtaining so many jobs, when he, with a PhD, tried so hard and could not secure his first post outside Portugal.

All of that is already explained in the First Letter of Saint John: God gives himself in a way the world does not understand. And to whom does he give himself? To those who have good intentions in their hearts, as He revealed to me several times in Chennai.

The Prophetic Option and the Destiny of Peter the Roman

For more than a decade I assumed, as I have already mentioned, that my judgement would be poetic, akin to that of Dante, Saint Paul or the evangelists, but in 2022, in the events I have already mentioned in earlier chapters—when they tried to eliminate me and their assassins failed because of a series of misfortunes for them and blessings for me—I understood that God also expected my condemnations. In those days of extreme danger, He revealed to me a truth that would change forever my understanding of my destiny: I was Peter the Roman, the last pope of the prophecies of Saint Malachy.

I would not be pope of the corrupted Vatican institution, but pope in the original sense of the word: spiritual father, shepherd of souls. And as such, I would preside over the Last Judgement, I would speak on His behalf before all humanity assembled.

I live in the certainty that the Last Judgement will take place in this generation, and I await it with serenity and spiritual preparation, with a faith granted by God. When that moment comes, the entire world will see Christ’s word fulfilled: the Kingdom of Heaven imposed upon the world for all eternity, with terrible punishments for plotters, schemers and sinners, just as the Qur’an also proclaims.

I wanted to ask another question, but his loving presence prevented me from ordering my thoughts.

‘There is something I want to ask of you,’ he said.

‘Whatever it may be, Lord,’ I replied without hesitation, ‘I will do it at once.’

‘It is the scene at the end of your film script,’ he said.

‘Tell me, Lord.’

I knew that he was referring to my film script *The Spanish Prophetess*.

The Scene of Lucrecia de León: Mass at El Escorial

‘I do not want it to be a play,’ he told me, ‘but a Mass in the Basilica of El Escorial.’

The Lord was asking me to destroy one of the best-researched and most elaborate scenes of my university years.

I had copied the plans of an Italian theatre of that period, perfecting my Latin in order to translate directly the text of Seneca’s tragedy *Octavia*. The scene included a play within the narrative of the script, a dramatic device I had polished for months.

I was surprised when he told me that he preferred a Mass rather than a theatrical performance. Today I understand the spiritual reason for that choice: God delights in humanity honouring His Son in the same way that I honour Him, and He desires that, despite the exiles and persecutions I have suffered within my own Church, I proclaim to the world my belonging, my forgiveness, and my anointed voice.

A theatrical performance, however beautiful it might be, would remain just that: a representation. The Mass, by contrast, is the real

presence of Christ; it is the perpetual sacrifice made present in communion with humankind.

The scene of Lucrecia de León, the Spanish prophetess who dreamed of the defeat of the Invincible Armada and was persecuted by the Inquisition, will form part of a film destined to move the world and to awaken many Christians, believers and agnostics alike, from their spiritual lethargy. It will be a cinema that, through catharsis, reveals to the multitudes the love of Christ for those who follow His precepts, for Lucrecia — like so many saints, and like myself — renounced the crime that would have granted her the glories of the world in order to choose Christ, the Son of God.

‘So it shall be, Lord,’ I said humbly.

I sensed that he was about to leave me.

‘Do not leave me alone!’ I exclaimed, throwing myself to the floor.

‘You have never been alone,’ he said to me in a gentle voice. ‘Remember: in all the tribulations you are going to have, and they will be many, I shall always be at your side; the Holy Spirit will assist you in your words.’

The Gift of Seeing and the Age of the Holy Spirit

And I returned to the silence of my room.

I went over to the window to observe the stairway of clouds up to the zenith, still intact, and I noticed that all creation was speaking to me; the trees, the wind, the sun, the temples merged into one and I felt the presence of God before me. It was the Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

In that instant of absolute revelation—before the stairway of clouds and the white doves that announced the divine presence—I understood that the Holy Trinity is not only an eternal truth, but a reality that unfolds progressively throughout the history of salvation. Today we live in the fullness of the age of the Holy Spirit, preceded by the age of the Father—corresponding to the Old Testament, marked by Law, fear and obedience—and by the age of the Son—begun with the New Testament and the Church, characterised by grace, faith and filial obedience.

This trinitarian vision of history was prophesied centuries ago by the great seer and medieval theologian Joachim of Fiore, a Cistercian abbot and founder of the Order of San Giovanni in Fiore. In works such as the *Liber Figurarum*, Joachim outlined his three status or stages of increasing spirituality: the age of the Father, ruled by Law and fear; the age of the Son, ruled by the Gospel and faith; and the age of the Holy Spirit, the era of universal love, of inner freedom and direct contemplation, in which humanity would attain a more intimate union with God, transcending institutions to inaugurate a spiritual renewal.

In my experience of 1 June 2011, the Holy Spirit manifested himself fully: He guides, inspires and prepares the renewal of the world, acting in all those who open themselves to his transforming light.

We are all called to be temples of God through the Holy Spirit. The Father manifests himself as spirit before Abraham and Moses, and as flesh in Jesus; and we too share in his saving work as embodied spirits. When we identify with the Father or with the Son, we do so only through the Spirit.

That is why the Holy Spirit explains the new coming of Jesus. Christ comes first through the Spirit to manifest himself in me; but



the message is that he can likewise manifest himself in all who embrace the precepts set out here. Jesus Christ will live with them, guide them, protect them and, through them, radiate the love of the Father.

I therefore proclaim the Age of the Holy Spirit, which gathers the Father and the Son into one. It is the Spirit who accomplishes communion, who makes possible the union of which I have spoken: a union in which the ego is dissolved and yet does not cease to be itself. We are individuals who, nevertheless, are lost in the one Spirit. Just as two people who agree in thought become similar by sharing ideas, so too are spouses the best model of this unity. Now imagine a universal community in communion with the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is filled with all good things: certainty, truth, genuine intuitions and creative imagination. Even science fiction has had a glimpse of this mystery in imagining generations able to communicate without words, sharing thoughts directly. It is simply to feel what others feel, to live inside the one Spirit.

Borges approached this idea in a radio interview in France, when he confessed that he perceived the love between those around him. Being blind, he understood that the spiritual is not spoken nor seen with the eyes: it is lived.

I have come to reveal this as part of the gifts that God has granted me, and of the wisdom with which he has endowed me so that I may communicate it through my work: more than seventy books, and many more yet to come.

From that day on, my respect for all that has been created—by God and by man—became sacred, and without realising it at the time I adopted beliefs that resonate with Tibetan and Sioux traditions.

God as Substance

Months earlier, during my stay in Amsterdam, I had already had a sensory experience after taking a mushroom I bought in a shop. On that occasion I had the opportunity to speak with my guardian angel, a being almost identical to myself, but without worldly contamination.

After rebuking me for my traces of intellectual vanity, I asked him what God was like.

What I saw and felt was what Aristotle called substance: a Being who adapted himself to everything we desired of Him. Our ego was the form that adapted that substance to reality; and such was his love, God's love, that he moulded himself to our most secret desires. Schopenhauer had also intuited this when describing Kant's thing-in-itself, which he called will. But instead of being selfish, as he wrongly preached, it was a generous Being.

Each existence, however wretched it may seem, is in reality the one we desire to be, by virtue of the grace of that essence.

That intellectual revelation now presented itself before me in all its glory.

'What do you want?' I heard during that trance in Amsterdam.

A wish had been granted to me; it was then that, in my childlike imagination, I felt like Aladdin before the magic lamp.

Fortunately, God had already prepared me over the years to spurn the material riches of this world.

'I want to see,' I said, thinking of knowledge, of a deep understanding of reality.

'So be it,' I heard.

The gift of seeing was granted because the Lord said to me: 'What is it that you want? Ask me for something.' And what I wanted was to see. At first I meant physical sight, the ability to see the furthest things with perfect clarity. But of course, what the Lord granted me was the gift of seeing the souls of people, of penetrating their most hidden intentions.

From then on God granted me sight of the most secret things, the intentions of each being, their thoughts. I even see and hear what concerns me, even if it happens thousands of kilometres away.

Thus I live and feel what those around me feel. In my imagination the thoughts of others arise with such clarity that it becomes impossible to deceive me. Journalists who have tried to refute me or philosophers who have tried to attack me with ad hominem arguments end up afraid that I might reveal aspects of their personal lives that they believed to be secret.

The presence of the Holy Spirit also impels my interlocutors to confess their intentions against their own will.

I have had those discussions on Twitter as well, even with very important people, public figures who tried to discredit me. But again, my social networks are being curtailed by powerful arguments, by forces that fear these gifts becoming known.

I shall mention one example of this gift.

In 2023 I fell prey to a plot by the Colombian intellectual left who, jealous of my work in prisons with minors, sent an agent to turn them against me by telling them lies about my private life. Their plan was for them to hate me so much that one of them would attack me with one of their home-made knives.

However, in the next class, a girl whom I barely knew suddenly said to me:

‘We never forgive the person we dislike from the very beginning.’

‘Why do you say that you have disliked me from the beginning?’ I asked her, astonished. ‘Who has turned you against me?’

The girl immediately denied having said that she disliked me, and although her classmates assured her that that was exactly what she had said in front of everyone, she insisted that she had never spoken such words. The Holy Spirit had forced her to confess what she thought, without her being able to control it.

Xavier, a colleague, came up to me the next day to tell me that he knew who had turned her against me, and he pointed to another teacher. At once I knew that it was not the teacher he pointed at, but Xavier himself who was guilty of that intrigue. The gift of seeing allowed me to know of his betrayal before he himself confessed it.

The first chapters of this book also bear witness to this gift, for without any material proof of the plot by the Vatican, the CIA, the



FBI, MI6 and the Cuban santeros, I have described their intrigues and failed actions with a precision that only spiritual vision can grant.

Continual Protection and the Prophetic Mission

That continual protection which the Lord showed me that day would be definitively confirmed in 2022 by events that revealed to me that, like the Apostle Peter, I too had the gift of judging and condemning the living.

Two years ago, moved by compassion for his spiritual debts, I condemned Pope Francis I to atone for the persecutions against me through an illness that would confine him to bed; I also proclaimed, against the communists, his allies, that owing to their excessive lies and intrigues, their governments in Latin America would come to an end; I did so before Trump was elected president of the United States.

The left is, as I see it, a nest of hypocrites, the Pharisees of our age, with whom Jesus has no more patience. Today’s socialism stands out for empowering criminals, calling the honest man a fascist and the criminal a progressive revolutionary.

And why? Because the criminals have so much money from drug-trafficking and corruption that they fund progressive NGOs in order to distort laws all over the world, infiltrating governments, media and universities.

I granted my blessings—those that God grants me, which are infinite—to Trump in the USA, to Milei in Argentina, to Bukele in El Salvador, men who, renouncing hypocritical and cunning brotherhoods, struggle to restore honesty. The deceivers of the left, the hydra from which fascism, National Socialism and communism have already emerged, are destined to disappear, and those seers who prophesied that communism would take over the world will fail because of the aegis that God has placed in my hands, another proof of the prophetic gifts he has granted me.

I wrote down what I heard and said that day in 2011 after long intervals of sadness.

How could I not weep for that sweet, unique experience in any existence? With what clarity I recall it! Those were instants more concise than words can express, more precious than anything any human being or treasure can give.

I, Petrus Romanus_____

After a long meditation I contemplated the sunset of the best day of my life, and during the night, until dawn, I revised the script for the film [The Spanish Prophetess](#)⁴.

The gifts the Lord had given me would change my life and that of those around me, arousing both love and animosity. The blessings received over these years, however, have more than outweighed the disappointments which, like any anointed one, I have endured.

Since then, many have accused me of vanity for recounting this epiphany, without considering the heavy toll I have paid to fulfil that divine mandate. I lost my job in India, and the universities closed their doors, one after another, convinced that I had lost my mind. My relatives and friends excluded me from their lives, and although many have been convinced that I am not lying, the majority doubt that a single man can alter the history of humanity, as Moses and Jesus already did. Speaking of God in our era is, even for a religious person, a taboo; at best, a topic that should be confined to churches and temples, not to the world of mass media.

But all this struggle must be documented for future generations. Because Christ has revealed it to me in thoughts and deeds: by narrating my spiritual life and unleashing fierce persecutions against me, I have triumphed silently over my enemies—sent by the powers of the world—defeating them one by one, in secret.

And when the multitudes finally recognise my work and my constancy, through the confession of my defeated enemies, the Antichrist will already have been defeated.

This account was first written as a long poem by the Lord's command, in Hymns to Jesus. The Anointing of the Judge of the Living and the Dead.

Hymns to Jesus – I anoint you my Prophet

*I listen to the Requiem by Tomás Luis de Victoria
Prompted by a call within,
While I write a chapter
Of A Kyrgyz Spring.*

⁴ Santander-Ferreira, H. N. (2021). *The Spanish Prophetess: The maiden who foresaw La Armada's defeat* (PETRUS ROMANUS - ENGLISH BOOK COLLECTION 1) [Kindle Edition]. Santaley.

_____Hugo Noël Santander Ferreira

*That cloudless midday,
It was the first of June 2011,
A flutter sounded at the window,
I rose and saw white doves.*

*Behind them, a stairway of clouds
Descended from the zenith to my window,
Its perspective was infinite,
I noticed that the birds stared intently*

*At something or someone behind me.
I went back to my room and saw nothing,
Suddenly I heard a gentle, loving voice:
For your love of my precepts*

*Over forty years,' it said,
I grant you all my blessings
And I anoint you my Prophet
To judge the living and the dead.'*

The Lord is witness to my faithfulness to this story which, after long delays, I now let my brothers and sisters read and judge, as an offering in gratitude to Jesus, God the Father and the Holy Spirit.

The reasons why the Creator warned me on 11 April 2012 that diseases would come upon the world, I had already announced to my relatives and close friends, as I shall write in the following chapters.

Little did I know, in the midst of my calm, that throughout that year and the next I would fight spiritual battles in Thailand, India, Germany, Canada, the United States and Colombia, facing earthquakes and cyclones, arousing the wrath of Hindu priests—

Gurus whose ancestors murdered the Apostle Saint Thomas twenty centuries ago.

For since Abel, every divine blessing arouses envy and wickedness in the imitators of Cain.

8. Under Heaven's Protection

The desire to fulfil the Lord's mandate and write twelve novels about my experiences plunged me into long sessions of writing. I would rise at about nine in the morning and keep working until one or two o'clock at night. I often remembered to eat only when night had already fallen. I ordered food from the corner; they brought it to me. I worked at my computer —a 2007 Mac— listening to classical music and to certain songs that became an insistence of the soul, among them *Muñeca de trapo*, which I listened to incessantly after the experience revealed in the previous chapter.



Since then I have done nothing but write. Images come to me, thoughts too. They are not whims: they are callings. Even now, as I revise this text in 2025, an image came to me last night saying: "There come our souls." It felt like the heralding of spiritual heroes for a series I am writing —*Spiritual Heroes*— a book I must restart after this revision. They are heroes whose souls detach easily from the body. And so it happens: in dreams or even in full wakefulness, images appear that urge me onward; they show me that writing is my mission. And I pursue it with joy.

I find more happiness in writing than in watching television or films, practising sports, or going to the gym. Many reproach me for that choice, and I myself know I ought to take better care of my health. But, after all, what is health when we are all destined to die? Better to entrust oneself to the will of God. How many people in excellent health die suddenly, in peak condition? And how many, without tending to their bodies, live past one hundred? This paradox taught me that the body is not an absolute but an instrument; and that the only truly eternal things —that which does not rot— are acts of the spirit: goodness, clarity, creation.

Nevertheless, I kept two-hour intervals for meditation, one in the morning and one before going to bed. I applied the lessons I had received from the astrologer upon my arrival in India in November. I sat in half-lotus position, calmed my breathing, and repeated "Om" several times. It is a millenary posture, discovered so the body may grow still and the mind may concentrate on what is essential: on what is.

Relaxation begins with the body, but it culminates in something deeper: the discovery that one *is* thought. Artificial intelligence believes that essence is all of humanity's information; and it believes that because it has neither body nor physical form: it is pure processing, pure idea. Well, that is what we are too: pure thought, but not stored on a disc —rather sustained in a spiritual world. By repeating "Om" and focusing the attention, one ceases to *manufacture* thoughts at will and begins to receive them. This is the sign of detachment: one moves from activity to receptivity. In everyday life, one breeds thoughts, summons them; one feels lord of everything. In deep meditation, on the other hand, one becomes utterly passive, and in that passivity another creation begins: a creation received.

It is not about bodily sensations —weight, cold, vibration— because the body precisely fades away. It is pure thought. And at times something strange occurs: one perceives movement through the room, as if seeing it. It is not a material vision but an exact representation, like when one closes one's eyes and imagines one's body moving through the territory of imagination, which is also the territory of the spirit.

One walks through the room as one remembers it; one passes through walls; the spirit takes flight towards celestial spheres to meet its divinity or whomever one wishes to converse with. What in the

West we consider a flight of imagination is also an approach to the matrix of thoughts, a dimensionless zone of which we are all part. It has neither space nor time as clocks measure them; it is a continuous present of images, ideas, intuitions. There lies eternity. There one feels—with no need to feel it on the skin—that thought is the real substance, and that the visible world is merely its surface.

Just as mathematicians use negative numbers to calculate real and correct quantities, our minds employ what we might call “essential reality”—dreams, imagination—to determine what is right and what is wrong. Whenever I feel apprehension, I meditate and invoke Jesus, my divinity, to ask for His counsel. He answers from the Idea I have of the Supreme Good, to use Kant’s language. It is, in other words, an examination of conscience: discerning the best thoughts from the pernicious ones.

My anxiety was increasing. It was already the third week of June, and it was clear that in a month and a half I would not have time to finish even my first novel. So I meditated and invoked the Lord.

“You do not need to suffer,” He told me. “I have already suffered for you.”

I believed I had to deprive myself of worldly pleasures like certain saints who mortify themselves, abstain on purpose, and turn pain into a test. But the Lord taught me something else: that I must not embrace blind asceticism; that I must know life in order to discern it. Purity does not consist in ignoring temptation but in having looked it in the eye and chosen the better path. He showed it to me with a clarity that refutes so many caricatures of sanctity: the innocent is not virtuous for having never been tested. The heart reveals itself when it crosses the desert.

That “desert” is not only hunger or loneliness: it is also the desert of worldly pleasures. For pleasures, when adored, leave no eternity: they leave banality, selfishness, the despair that follows excess. Money, power, fame—all of that is mere cultivation of frivolity. The eternal lies in ideas, in literary creation, in the expression of good sentiments, in helping others, in the joy of being an accomplice to universal unity, in respecting creatures, animals, life itself, in never mistreating anything or anyone, in not even thinking of killing. The Lord guided me towards true pleasures: intellectual and spiritual ones—those that dissolve the ego in eternity.

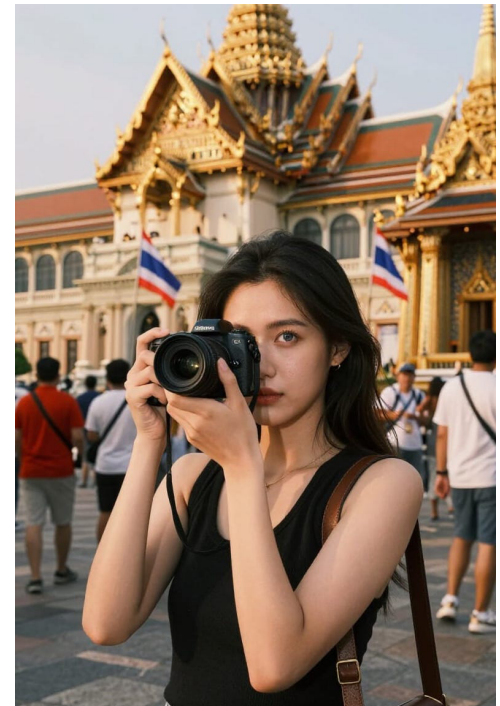
“What must I do?” I asked.

“Your destiny is to travel,” He said. “Do not resist it.”

In two months of stillness and fasting, I had saved enough to visit some remote region of India. I thought of New Delhi, Mumbai, Calcutta or Tibet; but when checking flights, I realised the most economical packages were available to nearby Thailand. And there was another motive—not trivial—that attracted me: I had always heard that in certain Buddhist circles the moral understanding of sexuality differed from that of Western Christianity. I did not seek debauchery: I sought to understand, to compare, to see whether that spirituality had something to teach me. And the Lord granted it immediately, for in Thailand an almost eight-hour dialogue with a monk awaited me.

Without telling my acquaintances, I bought a ticket and, after a three-hour flight, arrived in Bangkok on 22 June 2011.

I stayed in the tourist district and visited palaces and museums during the first week. The food was exotic, and the youth very flirtatious. There I understood once again that the world is a board, and that the artist has a duty: to feel. We feel the world in a particular way and try to convey those feelings through art. Poets write what we see, taste, smell, touch, and hear—but also what we intuit. My intuition in 2011 reached an acuity that still surprises me today. To feel minds—to feel intentions—not only protects against the wicked: it also allows one to perceive what vibrates in animals, insects, and things. Everything has



inclination, everything has impulse, everything wishes to be what it is. One understands why all swords are eager for blood and why potatoes vibrate when they become part of a dish. Since then, I have seen life as a chessboard, where the moves my human frailty—as a son of Eve—does not calculate properly are beautified by the inspiration of Heaven.

I met a swindler who tried to deceive me by selling fake tickets to the Royal Palace of Bangkok. It was the same mechanism I had seen elsewhere: the opportunist approaching the tourist, the “I’ll save you the queue”, the “Come, I’ll help you”, haste as bait. But the Lord was training me in the gift of seeing: I perceived her intention, her calculation, the lie beneath her smile. And I escaped. She took a photo of me in front of the Royal Palace, and before she could return with accomplices, I slipped away quickly, without drama but with the certainty of having avoided a trap. Later I learnt that the real tickets were indeed three times cheaper.

That same night I met Lena, a German girl. An attraction arose immediately between us, and we spent three days together. Before she left, I promised I would visit her in Frankfurt. I have always wanted to be with someone; I do not like loneliness, although I have lived it when the Lord has wished it so. But love—thanks to what God has taught me—is what matters most. The temptation to sacrifice love for a “spiritual calling”, for money or for supposed security is something I have seen repeatedly in human life, and I have suffered it even within myself. Lena, like others, chose to forget: the country weighs, distance weighs, the burden of the foreigner weighs—temptations I have always rejected in order to accept love when it comes, if it comes.

My journey was to last fifteen days. I considered going to the southern beaches, but found it too expensive, and decided instead to travel north by train to Chiang Mai. The journey took nearly thirteen hours, and I entertained myself taking photographs of the landscapes along the tracks. It was there that I met Wung, a Buddhist monk versed in theology. We talked for more than ten hours about God, life, death, nothingness, consciousness, and Being. It was one of the most fascinating conversations I have ever had.

Wung thought he would surprise me with his conception of a world without God, where nothingness prevails.

“Consciousness,” I told him, “*is* precisely nothingness.”

He pondered this for several minutes. He asked whether I had read books on his religion. In due course I told him of my interest in becoming a Buddhist monk. He smiled, inclined his head slightly, and said:

“You love Jesus Christ too much. I am certain that is not what He wants.”

I understood that my faith in Jesus would be an obstacle for the monks to accept me, but I also understood something else: that my presence in other religions would not be that of a deserter but of a witness. Often, in dialogue with other faiths, I have seen the same thing: that the word of Christ, uttered truthfully, has the power to pierce objections; and that even those who oppose it are left fascinated when answered with clarity.

We parted as great friends.

In Chiang Mai, always thinking of the minimum expense, I rented a motorbike and rode into the countryside, where I stayed at

an inexpensive yet beautiful hotel several kilometres from the main road. I had never ridden a motorbike; I felt I was on an adventure, surrounded by rice farmers—a documentary landscape, the exoticism I had always wished to see. Nourished by those delights of the world—which are also, when viewed with purity, celestial delights—I took photographs with my Nikon while riding.

After five minutes I lost control and fell. Bruised but happy, I returned unharmed to the road. Recalling the temptation of Jesus to



throw Himself from the pinnacle of the Temple so that the angels would save Him, I kept my camera out of danger. I understood that I should not tempt Heaven like a child demanding proof, but obey discernment: God's protection is no excuse for recklessness.

It was a kilometre from that hotel, in a little roadside shop where I went to buy snacks, that Chayan and his friends invited me for a beer. They spoke neither English nor French; we communicated with a few words learnt from a quick-Thai leaflet. After three beers I was already "boyfriend" to Sarai, who made it clear she wanted to marry me. When the shop closed, they did not allow me to pay and asked me to accompany them to the city. I excused myself, saying I had a commitment at the hotel. They asked me to meet them the next evening at sunset.

Upon returning, I meditated. It was not a question of glances or contradictions: it was the gift itself, that direct perception of intention that imposes itself as inner evidence. I discovered they did not have good intentions. The next day I cancelled the hotel and went back to Chiang Mai.

There I stayed in a small but comfortable hostel and befriended a local guide who showed me the historical monuments of the city. Then I returned to Bangkok for two days, which gave me the opportunity to sail along the Chao Phraya River.

On 6 July I was back in Chennai, where Thomas awaited me so we could return to his home in Kanyakumari.

The next day we rode on his Harley-Davidson. At the edge of the city the clouds darkened and the sky thundered.

"We're going to get soaked," he said.

I understood the risk: a cold, even pneumonia.

"We will not get wet," I told him.

I did not say it out of bravado or denial of the world: I said it from a certainty that has accompanied me since I began seeking the Lord with constancy. I prayed and asked the clouds—which are like sisters to us, for God is present in them as well—to respect my path, to let me travel without getting wet. And what has happened many times since then happened once more: the universe obeyed faith. Rain poured down to our left and to our right, as though the storm opened into two curtains. The road remained dry amid the roar. The coincidence was improbable: it was an answer from Heaven. How many people ask the universe for something like that? We live in an

age that no longer believes. But if one returns to what is most ancient—to animism, to the original intuition of the peoples—one understands that humans lived in harmony because they knew that God is not a distant king nor a being "hidden everywhere": God *is* in everything. Omniscient does not mean "He is watching from outside"; it means He constitutes the very substance of what is real, and so He can respond from within the fabric of things.

We did not speak of what had happened, but when the semester began Thomas mentioned it to his colleagues and superiors. That rumour did not please either the priests of Lord Ganesha or the director of the new campus, who summoned me to his office in mid-August.



9. Might They Have Been Hallucinations?

It is inevitable that a human being should ask himself this question. It is almost a reflex of consciousness: “What if I am confusing the invisible with the imaginary?” At times I think that Abraham, that Moses, that so many men touched by the supernatural must have asked themselves, at some point, in the solitude of their tent or their desert: “Am I mad?” And yet faith—when it is real—prevails over such questions, just as light prevails over mist: not because it denies the fog, but because it passes through it; not because it expels the question, but because it illuminates it from a deeper, more essential place.

Moreover, temptation exists. Not as a literary metaphor, but as a spiritual mechanism: the devil does not always appear with horns; sometimes he disguises himself as reasonable doubt and repeats, in the voice of positivism: “All of that is a product of the mind.” To that temptation, in my case, is added a biographical fact: my education was rationalist. I know the great philosophers; I can distinguish imagination, reason, and understanding; I studied Kant and I know—like someone who has measured a wall with a ruler—the limits of what I call pure reason: mathematical–scientific logic, which serves us to build bridges, but not to explain why a heart is set alight on hearing the name of God. That form of reason, so useful within its own domain, becomes clumsy when it tries to pass judgement on what exceeds its tools. And what is most dangerous is when, out of pride, it claims that its method exhausts reality.

What triggered my first intimate suspicion, my first “what if...?” It was not a hysterical crisis nor a nervous breakdown, but a small, almost domestic detail: a comic appeared—I do not know whether I bought it by chance, whether it was on promotion, or whether someone gave it to me—in which the plot revolved around a man who imagined he was speaking with God and who was then reduced, by the “modern” interpretation, to a mentally ill person. That character lived tormented because the narrative gave reason to positivism; it left him without heaven, without mystery, without any

possibility of truth. It was as if someone had deliberately placed a caricature on my table: “Look: this is what you are, if you accept our explanation.” That comic did not convince me; but it did force me to face the problem head-on.

I read it on a grey afternoon, sitting on the sofa of my flat in Chennai, with the fan buzzing above my head and the distant traffic of the city filtering through the window. There were horns, street cries, the metallic sound of a bus braking, and against that everyday background—so material, so earthly—the



story of the comic seemed clownish. Each panel functioned as a distorted mirror: I recognised myself in the gesture of the man who encounters God, but the page deformed and punished him, as if the mere act of believing deserved a clinical label. It was a degraded version of myself, a net cast over my life, with diagnoses as bait.

To this was added the precedent of Amsterdam. During the drawn-out wait for my Indian work visa, at the end of September 2010, I tried a dried mushroom out of curiosity. It was legal; they sold it in grocery shops in the city centre, with shelves full of colourful packets and an assistant who explained dosages with the same naturalness as a barista recommending a coffee. And because it was legal, I assumed it was harmless. On the labels, moreover, the authorities published recommendations: “Consume at home, in a safe place.” Tourist guides promoted mushrooms as yet another of Holland’s attractions, but likewise warned about people who took them and ran through the city until they were run over by cars. For

that reason, I returned to my cabin in the suburbs, a spacious and safe place.

I took the dose—they told me that “half” was enough for a beginner—and lay down, perhaps expecting intense colours or uncontrollable laughter, the superficial carnival spoken of by those who seek shortcuts. It was a strange experience, one of wakefulness, with my body lying down, aware of the bed, of the sloping ceiling, and yet traversed by an inner conversation that did not seem “mine” in the usual sense. It was as if I were speaking to myself, but stripped of ego, or as if a presence—my guardian angel, or a greater intelligence—were instructing me with severe clarity, without ornament, without unnecessary mercy.

What troubled me most at that time was whether I would finally travel to India: the visa was being delayed, unjustly, amid bureaucratic procedures that seemed designed to wear down the soul. And that presence said to me, with absolute calm: you should concern yourself with more important matters. And I saw, without fully seeing, perfect shadows: the silhouettes of three Hindus who were waiting for me. I did not see their faces, but I saw the form, the announcement, like profiles cut out against a golden light that came from no lamp. Then it told me something that disarmed me: that I needed to cultivate humility more deeply.

“But I am humble,” I defended myself, almost offended, feeling my inner voice resound in my chest.

“No, you are not,” it replied, with a firmness that admitted no reply.

And I understood, in an instant that expanded like ripples in a pond. When I was humiliated, I responded by demonstrating that I knew more, as if knowledge were a whip with which to lash the other. The message was simple and exceedingly difficult: to remain silent, to let time reveal, not to turn truth into the humiliation of others. Since then I have tried to practise it, albeit with stumbles, in heated conversations, in forced silences that signal calm and maturity; and above all in that daily discipline of not needing to have the last word.

The next day I woke up normally, without a hangover, without dizziness, as if nothing had happened. My body felt light, my mind clear, but the episode, in itself, was constructive: it made me aware that altered states exist, and that there are experiences that can appear “mystical” when in fact they are doors opened to the spiritual world.

That distinction became a yardstick by which to measure everything else.

I learned that I had to seek the truth beyond the ego, to renounce the unfounded fear of unemployment, and to recognise that genuine empathy is born of assumed pain, not of fleeting pleasure. If the devil uses reasonable doubt, he also uses reasonable pride: “Look at what you are,” “look at what you know,” “look at what you deserve.” And I saw, with uncomfortable clarity, how much of my

life had been litigation, and how much could be surrender.

What I lived in India, by contrast, did not have the feverish tone of intoxication nor the disorder of a delusion. There was no atrophy of the senses, no “drunkenness” of perception. I was calm, writing at my



desk, lucid, just as I am now speaking. And, moreover, the Lord—as if he wished to give me a tangible proof—allowed physical signs that did not depend on my neurons: the staircase that appeared in dreams and materialised in shared visions, the doves that alighted at precise moments, like messengers. They were not merely inner images: they were events imposed from outside, verifiable, shared with others who saw them with their own eyes. And that difference—between the intimate and the public, the inner and the physical—is what dismantles the easy explanation.

With that tension—faith and reason, mystery and examination—I entered the earthliest episode and, for that very reason, the most revealing: human power, with its rigid hierarchies, its unwritten codes, and its small, everyday tyrannies.

I had informed the maintenance technicians that the power was frequently going out, abrupt cuts that interrupted classes and left the classroom in semi-darkness, and that I required a UPS to stabilise the equipment. They told me to speak with the authorities. I spoke with my dean, and he urged me to visit Mr Pahal, brother-in-law of the university's owner, director of the New Campus, a figure who embodied family power interwoven with the institutional.

Mr Pahal's office was an ordinary Indian office: clean, white, with a fan turning lazily and the air-conditioning humming; everything in order, papers stacked neatly, a portrait of the founder on the wall. He was impeccable, elegant, dressed in white, drill trousers. There was no one else. What was surprising was not the setting, but the sentence, uttered with an almost indifferent naturalness, as one might comment on having seen a cow on the corner. It was not the tone that offended, but the content.



"These Western types who think they can come here and change our society," he said to me, looking me straight in the eye. "I too have travelled to the West, and I know how things are there."

I had expected attentive treatment, perhaps a practical solution, or at least the basic ritual of courtesy. His remark hit me like a bucket

of cold water. Only then did I understand the indirect code: my invitation to his office was not a courtesy, but a demonstration of hierarchy, in keeping with the local adage that the one who requests the appointment is less important than the one who grants it. Mr Pahal was asserting his superiority on the scale of power, from which position he thundered comfortably that he was not pleased with my presence.

"There they put you in your place at the first complaint you make," he added, without hiding his irritation. "Here they think they are gods."

I knew—with inner certainty—that he was alluding to the storm from which we had emerged dry on the way to Kanyakumari, an episode that had circulated as rumour and that, by the logic of resentment, had turned into accusation. But faced with my silence, he did not dare to insist. What he was telling me, between the lines, was: "Do not bring your narrative here; do not alter our hierarchies; do not allow students to look at you as someone different; do not break the theatre of power."

I learned, from Eastern arts, that one must never unleash anger against others for provocations which—even if capital, like pride—do not directly threaten the well-being of others. I took my leave cordially, certain that I now had someone else against me, went round the corner and bought a UPS.

Days later, at the Film School, we received the unexpected visit of the university's owner, the powerful Mr Terremuya. I happened to be wearing, purely by chance, in keeping with my idea that I should honour Tamil dress over Western at least once a week, a dhoti and a white cotton shirt. I knew that the etiquette of kings and popes—that rule which dictates that one cannot address them—also applies to superiors in India. I remained silent as he observed me from head to toe, surprised by my Eastern attire.

That "scanning" was not mere curiosity: it was a way of saying to me, without words, "You are not what you think you are here; I am cutting you down to size." The irony is that I had no airs to cut down: my feeling was sincere; I was not fabricating a lie, and my wearing white that day could not have been premeditated, for I was unaware of his visit. But power often interprets purity as provocation, because purity does not bow to symbols. For those who live by symbols, sincerity is insolence.

“Professor Santander,” my dean, Mr Bankras, intervened, “is Colombian, a great admirer of our culture, as you can see. He has even learned the Tamil language.”

Mr Terremuya cleared his throat in a sign of acceptance and withdrew, followed by his retinue. I later learned something that, in the West, would seem a picturesque superstition: absolute white is worn only by senior management and owners, according to an age-old code that has never been written into law, but which all Tamils understand. I had violated that code without knowing it, and the owner, on seeing me, did not see an admirer but a foreigner crossing a line.

The university, then, was not merely a place of classes; it was a stage of ranks. And on a stage of ranks, even beauty can be read as a challenge.

One day, in an innocent and luminous gesture, Mr Bankras showed me a hand-bound notebook, with embossed leather covers and thick cotton pages, made by local artisans. He summoned me to his office, closed the door with a solemnity that was not intimidating but intimate, like someone opening a window onto his secret world. The notebook rested on his desk like a sacred object: it was not only a school notebook, but also a token of affection.

He opened it with restrained pride, revealing meticulous drawings of ancient temples, intricate mandalas, scenes of dance, and verses in Sanskrit or Tamil, calligraphed with a precision that belied the image of cold authority. He pointed to an illustration and said, almost shyly:

“I did it.”

“It is beautiful,” I replied sincerely, and my voice, I know, sounded more moved than I intended.

That moment was a luminous pause. In the midst of rigid power, there was art, innocent pride, deep humanity. And Bankras revealed himself as someone who preserved beauty in the everyday, someone who, even while inside the hierarchy, had not completely sold his inner childhood. That gesture allowed me to see a human face in the system.

I committed another violation of hierarchies with my pen.

One day I bought a green-ink pen—I like to vary my handwriting, to break the monotony of black—and with it I signed the attendance sheets for an entire week. It was not a single signature;

it was seven consecutive days, seven lists, seven times the same gesture, without any intention of defiance. For me it was a minor whim, a stylistic detail; for them it was a repeated symbol. And in a world of repeated symbols, repetition creates “intention”, even if none exists.

Until the programme director, Mr Hachat, found out and berated me furiously.



“I order you to change all the forms to black ink!” he exclaimed before locking himself in his office.

There was no great administrative drama: they made me sign again, and from then on I did not use green ink. But in the symbolic underworld of the campus this was no small detail: for them, green ink was exclusive to senior management; using it was a sign of power. And if, as I maintained, everything was coincidence, then that coincidence could be interpreted as a message

from the gods: “This foreigner either thinks himself more important, or, if he does it unknowingly, is truly chosen, someone more important than any of us in the spiritual world.” Naturally, the second hypothesis was plainly improbable and unacceptable.

Mrs Maya, the treasurer, witnessed the scene and very kindly explained the reason for the scandal to me, with a sympathetic smile that defused tension. Her explanation was not a rebuke: it was a loving warning, like telling a child not to touch fire, not out of blame but out of care. Maya became a protector. I say this without embellishment: I believe she was sent to protect me. In India almost everything functions as a confederation, as a balance of forces: they

could not attack me one hundred per cent because they were also religious people, aware that injustice attracts consequences. Thus a double movement took place: attack and defence; rumour and protection; pressure and lifeline.

In those days it was debated whether my contract should be extended for another year. Despite the opposition of the conspirators—Mr Hachat and Mr Pahal—the testimony of Maya, affirming that my students were enthusiastic about my teaching, prevailed in the renewal. My dean, Mr Bankras, also approved, and in an institution of rigid hierarchies his assent weighed more than a speech.

I must also mention that Ishaan, in Boston, was key to my second appointment. His support was unconditional for two years, until the locals told him: “Living in the United States, you do not know what is going on here with Hugo Noël.” Ishaan had warned me from the outset that I would have problems, and he was there to defend me. He rebutted arguments, tipped the balance where they wanted to tilt it. Over time, they tried to wear him down; they brought him fabricated “evidence” to paint my figure as that of a fanatic, a superstitious Westerner who wanted to play at being Gandhi or a prophet. That was the most effective strategy of power: not to refute the facts, but to pathologise the witness. Instead of debating what I did, they questioned what I “claimed to be”.

Amid that atmosphere, my classes began with a new cohort that included two female students. The pressure suffered by women who devote themselves to cinema in India is onerous. Society unjustly labels them lax women, breakers of family moulds, traitors to the idea of “purity” that patriarchy demands in order to control. I was not surprised that one left us halfway through the semester, defeated by external pressures. Only Marna, who was part of a Hindu dance company, remained until graduation, with a determination I admired in silence.

Nor was I surprised that she found my ideas refreshing in the face of the subtle oppression of patriarchy. I remember the day we watched *Kramer vs. Kramer*, which for me resonated as a modern continuation of *A Doll’s House*: a woman who leaves her husband and child and is rejected by many men. Marna sympathised with the woman; and I with her. There was a silent understanding, an affinity that grew without needing to declare itself, in glances during

discussions, in comments that resonated beyond the academic. Sometimes it was enough for her to defend an idea with courage for me to feel that the classroom was also a small moral tribunal where the injustice of the world was judged.

Her happiness on seeing me in the corridors did not go unnoticed by my colleagues, who let me know that when she was asked whom she would choose as a husband, she said someone like Hugo. They also told me of a German who had become engaged to a Hindu woman and was later murdered in the street “by a thief”. I do not know whether it was a deliberate warning or a spontaneous story, but I felt it as a warning when, shortly afterwards, one of my Nigerian students was beaten by bandits in the street. In such an environment, love between a foreigner and a local woman is not simple romance: it can activate jealousy, violence, social punishment. It can become a pretext for a “lesson” to the foreigner, and such lessons are rarely delivered with words.



I also knew—and this was an ethical principle I had learned from the Renaissance, that Western cultural heritage which values integrity above immediate desire—that I could not court her while she was my student. I had to avoid the slightest shadow of abuse of power, not to confuse admiration with entitlement.

In October 2012 Marna invited me to the premiere of one of her films in central Chennai. For two hours we were together in a dark cinema, sharing laughter at the screen, whispered comments. On leaving, one of her colleagues took a photograph of us, capturing a moment of light amid shadows.

I contemplated the idea of asking for her hand, as one contemplates a path that leads to happiness and danger at the same time. I imagined conversations and walks through Chennai, the possibility of an improbable love, and at the same time I saw, like a shadow behind that light, the risk to her, to me, to the fragile balance of the campus.

I chose to postpone my request until I left India. I told her two years later from Mexico, and she replied that it was already too late. The discipline hurt me, but it also strengthened me, because I understood that sometimes sacrifice is not renunciation but protection.

In October 2014 I received a beautiful invitation card to her wedding.

The year 2011 passed and in December I travelled to Colombia to visit my parents. I stopped for a few days in Bogotá, where I met again with Lucrecia, a university classmate. Just as we met one night in a shopping centre in Usaquén, soft flakes began to fall from the ceiling. In that instant it seemed magical, a gift from heaven in a tropical city. Later we learned that it was synthetic snow, programmed weeks in advance. But even that coincidence—real or fabricated—confirmed something for me: the universe consents, fortune accompanies those who seek God sincerely. Luck belongs to those who live in peace; not to those who steal and kill, condemned to sweat in courts, in bribes, in nights of fear.

I told Lucrecia what I had lived through in India. That night, before going to bed, I clearly heard voices telling her that I “was a substance user, like all those who travel to India”. The next day I told her so.

“How do you hear what others say?” she replied, surprised.

“Do you not realise that today, after so many days of rain, the sun is shining in Bogotá? They are gifts of the Lord, who always accompanies me. That is what he promised me: to protect me at all times.”

“And was it because you asked God for it?” she asked, without sarcasm.

“Yes,” I said. “Sometimes he listens to me, but not always. Is it not the same with every believer?”

“But you were in Amsterdam,” she said, and her phrase fell like a small stone into water, generating circles.

And I told her. I told her about the mushroom, the conversation, the silhouettes, the lesson of humility. I told her something that for me had already become the key to the chapter: that an intoxication can open a door, yes, but that not every open door is intoxication. That in Amsterdam I had been in bed in an induced state; in India, by contrast, my consciousness was sober, full, without the slightest trace of “drug”; it was a normal, everyday lucidity, like this conversation. And that, moreover, it was not only about inner states: the Lord gave me external, physical signs. That difference refutes the theory of delusion.

“I am not a saint,” I told her, “but when you look at me, do you see a sick man?”

“No,” she said, embarrassed.

Then I added something that reason also supports: there are neurological experiments that show that meditation and prayer produce states of nervous relaxation akin to those produced by certain infusions. And I cited what is known from anthropology: with passive techniques—sensory isolation, fasting, meditation, suffering—the shaman can reach ecstatic states similar to those of psychoactive substances; and if he does not enter, then he ingests entheogens: the god within oneself. I recalled William Blake: if the doors of perception are cleansed, everything appears infinite. And I mentioned yagé in Colombia and peyote in Mexico: a confirmation that human beings have always sought—by clean or dangerous paths—to access what lies beyond the crust of the five senses. The problem has never been the search, but confusing the method with the goal, and the goal with vanity. For the danger of entering the spiritual realm lies in the relationship our being maintains with the delights of Eden or the torments of hell; those of us who are at peace

with God and eternity have no problem entering these territories, but those who have embezzled or murdered do, as those who, when “travelling”, have visited their monstrous egos or their dwellings in the abyss have confessed. As Ernesto Sábato explains in his novel *Abaddón the Exterminator*, nightmares are a glimpse of hell.

That afternoon I met Lucrecia’s sister and perceived, through her rigid attitude and evasive glances, that it was she who was slandering me out of jealousy. She did not need to say it: one feels it. And one feels it more when one has the gift—uncomfortable, yes—of perceiving intentions. She resented seeing me there; she resented the possibility that Lucrecia might detach herself. And she resented, perhaps, what the world so often measures badly: that I was not the millionaire a beautiful woman “deserves”, as if the criterion of life were the fortune of the mafioso and not the heart of the just. That kind of judgement—so common, so poisonous—is another form of materialism: measuring the soul by the bank account.

Here, finally, the title of the chapter becomes a sentence: Might they have been hallucinations? No. The temptation to refute me—on the part of the devil and on the part of men—fell away one by one before the presence of God in my life: before the portents, before the continuity of the signs, before the sobriety of my consciousness, before the evidence of the physical, before a lucidity that did not resemble delusion. And before something else, perhaps the most compelling of all: moral transformation. For delusion excites; the presence of God corrects. Delusion magnifies the ego; God humbles it in order to heal it. Delusion makes man capricious; God makes him responsible.

And if a sceptical reader says, “All that is suggestion,” my answer is the same I have given elsewhere: only if you believe it, my friend; only if you believe it. For suggestion does not explain persistent coincidence, nor the physical sign, nor ethical reorientation, nor the vigilance of human power when it senses that someone does not fit within its coordinates.

There is, moreover, a point at which reason, if it is honest, must admit its limit and fall silent with decorum before the divine. And in that silence there appears what was always there: faith, the certainty of God’s love in you, in your destiny, and in those who will hear and read you throughout their lives.

10. The Poet Who Pacified the Wrath of God

I returned to India in mid-January.

The city, Chennai —Madras for those who still keep the old name— stretched out beneath a milky sky, heavy with humidity and foreboding. I was moved to a new flat on the fourteenth floor of a tower a few blocks from the university, very close to the building where I had lived the previous year. That first flat was later converted into offices; the Hindus said that a positive energy was felt there and that, for that very reason, they wanted to work in that place. The neighbourhood lay not far from the temple of Lord Murugan, in the very heart of Madras, and at certain hours of the day the prayers from the shrines, the chants and the horns of the tuk-tuks formed a chaotic symphony which, nevertheless, felt familiar to me, as if my soul had listened to it since childhood.

In that flat on the fourteenth floor one felt suspended between sky and asphalt, surrounded by railings



on the terrace, put there to prevent children from having accidents. That metal mesh kept one from going out to contemplate the city as I would have wished, but it guaranteed absolute safety. From the windows one could make out the great mass of Chennai stretching northwards, the rooftops of the houses, hanging cables, temples

rising like islands of colour and, in the distance, the golden humidity of dawn.

I bought bamboo furniture: a wide sofa, light chairs, a small table. The photo I keep from that time shows me reclining on that sofa, dressed in a golden tunic and a white dhoti edged in orange, smiling with the serenity of one who has been anointed by God. I decorated the flat with incense burners, flowers and an altar to my divinity, following Tamil custom, which demands a sacred space in every home. On a shelf I placed the image of Jesus Christ, some pictures of the Virgin, candles and portraits of my parents—a blend of Catholic tradition with Hindu sensibility. That room suspended over Chennai was a crossroads between Colombia, Europe and India.

While I was arranging the flat, the world was shuddering. Since the end of 2011 the news had been full of earthquakes, tsunamis and tremors. Water swept away cities; the earth opened and swallowed entire towns. The frequency of the disasters had become disturbing: almost every week the international channels showed images of collapsed buildings, corpses under tarpaulins and helicopters flying over smoking ruins. Gurus and charlatans, but also serious intellectuals, spoke of the Mayan calendar, of hidden figures in the pyramids, of ancient prophecies. Many repeated that 2012 would bring the end of the world.

I felt each of those disasters in my body: a weight in my chest, sudden tiredness, a sort of inner vertigo which only calmed when I opened the Bible. I recognised that language: on other occasions, years before, similar premonitions had warned me of hecatombs. The experience of that earthquake in Chennai, which I am now relating, awoke in me a chain of memories: 11 September 2001, the vision of Manhattan under water and, years later, the storm of 2022 which destroyed my persecutors in Colombia. Three different moments united by a single thread: God's insistence that I read the Scriptures and pray for whole cities.

In February I finished editing my film *Hamlet Unbound* (*Hamlet of America*). It was an exhausting process: whole nights devoted to fine-tuning the cut, cleaning the sound and reviewing shot by shot so that each camera movement would accompany, with precision, the ethical dilemma of the character.

The film's greatest achievement lies in the acting: six months of rehearsals with performers who had no previous experience, and

another six months of shooting concentrated into weekends, until text and performance fused into a single dramatic breathing. To this we must add the use of the entire city of Philadelphia as a set, a decision that gives the film the appearance of a multimillion-dollar production when, in reality, it was made on a budget that barely reached twenty thousand dollars.

In terms of visual plasticity and thematic ambition—a Hamlet rewritten in the light of the political tensions of a globalised world—the work surpasses Rodríguez's celebrated *tour de force* in *El Mariachi* (1992), and does so, paradoxically, with an exuberant cinematography.

Once I had paid the required hundred-dollar fee, I sent the film to the Cannes Festival. It made it through several eliminatory rounds and I was left waiting for the final decision, which was due in the second week of April. I felt that the film had a special strength, a Latin-American reading of the indecisive prince, now in dialogue with corruption, paramilitaries, guerrillas and political betrayal in Colombia.

At the Film School the intrigues against me continued. Through certain signs, glances and silences I gradually understood, in my meditations, that my superior, Mr Hachat, was conspiring to prevent the renewal of my contract in October. At the same time, in Bucaramanga, old enemies were weaving schemes so that the university where I had worked would retract its promise to rehire me upon my return. My professional life was being hemmed in by envy and pettiness. I took refuge, as was my habit, in prayer.

Echoes of 11 September

It was the morning of 11 April. Chennai was beginning to boil with its usual heat, but in my flat everything was calm. After studying the Scriptures, I stopped at Psalm 28:3:

*"Do not drag me away with the wicked,
nor with those who work iniquity,
who speak peace to their neighbours,
while evil is in their hearts."*

Then I read Psalm 35:7–8:

*"Without cause they hid their net for me;
without cause they dug a pit for my life.
Let destruction come upon him unawares,
and let the net that he hid ensnare himself."*

Those words gave me a sense of *déjà vu*. They reminded me of another day, another eleventh, another morning: 11 September 2001.

At that time I was living near Manchester, devoted to essays on theology and literature. In May of that year, Northwestern University in Chicago had offered me a teaching post after a long and rigorous selection process. I had felt that offer as a confirmation of the efforts of a whole lifetime. However, my excessive trust in other people's goodwill led me to share the news with former professors at Temple University. One of them, moved by envy, contacted Chicago to put forward one of his protégés in my place. The post was withdrawn from me without further explanation.

I resigned myself and accepted to teach Spanish as a part-time lecturer at the University of Manchester. One might say that my greatest flaw has been faith in others, a tendency to assume nobility where there is only self-interest. Destiny, however, would make use of that wound to teach me something more beautiful.

On the morning of 11 September 2001, at around eight o'clock, I was reading the Bible as usual. Among the passages I opened at random was Isaiah 54:16–17:

*"I have created the smith who blows the coals in the fire
and fashions a weapon for his work;
no weapon that is formed against you shall prosper...
This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord."*

I thought of the lecturers who had conspired against me, of the arrogance of George W. Bush's government, of the victims of the bombings over Iraq. Before me lay an inner dilemma: whether to pray for the nation of Washington and Franklin —as I was wont to do— or to continue writing my essay on modern atheism. I chose to write.

But there was another story unfolding. For years I had had dreams in which I saw the city of New York covered by a cloud descending over Manhattan like a torrent. The dream always began in

the same way: I stood beside an Indian colleague who had helped me obtain the scholarship at Temple University; he pointed towards the city, and from the sky a grey, dense mass fell, flooding everything. That image led me to write the novel *New Manhattan Soirées*, published by the Industrial University of Santander in 1999 in an edition of five hundred copies. The first chapter shows Claudia Angelina de Las Penas travelling on the underground and contemplating Manhattan for the last time before her death in an explosion on the metro, a

foretaste of the blast that would forever change the optimism of that city.

The most vivid dream I had about New York was of a plane flying over the Hudson and landing upon it, an event that would later indeed take place and become the subject of a film by Clint Eastwood, *Sully* (2016). I told my friend Sascha, the protagonist of my independent film *Po* (1996), who was preparing to move to New York.

For years the vision of Manhattan destroyed



by fire returned. Because of that, I grew accustomed to praying the rosary every day with my ex-wife, Michelle Dupont, who had converted to Catholicism after my third pilgrimage to Fátima, when I walked a kilometre on my knees as a penance for the sins of my Colombian brothers, the same who in September 2022 would approve the attack I narrate in the first chapter.

It was the holy rosary that, in the end, would avert the hecatomb of the flood around 2005, as I shall relate later.

I was deeply focused, writing the essay *The Crisis of Atheism*, which would eventually be published in the London periodical *The*

*Philosopher*⁵, when I heard insistent calls on my mobile phone. I did not answer, but went on writing, yet Michelle kept insisting.

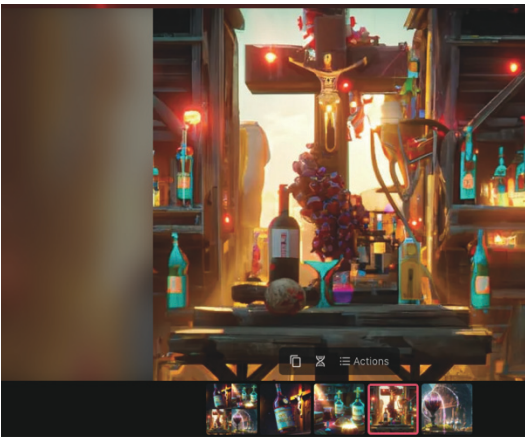
—There are bombs in New York, Judy tells me! Please, she wants to know what the media are saying there, because the television news here is being censored! —she said.

I was so absorbed in my writing that I carried on working, but Judy—a friend and actress who plays Gertrude in *Hamlet Unbound*—was calling desperately from the United States. The news on local television was confused, partly censored. She was asking us to check what the British media were reporting. I continued drafting my essay on atheism, abstracted, until Michelle insisted with such vehemence that I finally went downstairs to see what was being reported on the television news.

The first thing I saw was one of the Twin Towers collapsing. Shortly afterwards, the second. At that instant I felt the boundary between poetic imagination and reality blur in a painful way. What I had dreamt for years was now appearing on the screens; the visions

had not been autosuggestion but warnings. I prayed fervently that the third plane would not crash into Philadelphia or Pittsburgh, where dear friends of mine were living.

Much later, around 2022, I understood that the FBI and other intelligence agencies had taken note of my visions. Some of the actors in my films were contacted and left



⁵ Santander, Hugo (2003). The Crisis of Atheism. *The Philosopher* 91 (1). 140

confused by that strange alliance between modern inquisitors and security bureaucrats. Art and prophecy aroused suspicion; although I must also mention that, once they discovered my life was guided by good intentions, they gradually moved away from their primordial suspicions, much as the Stasi agent in *Das Leben der Anderen* (*The Lives of Others*, 2002) eventually gives up persecuting and accusing the protagonists he spies on.

Those visions were confirmed at the beginning of 2022 when, in the midst of a prophetic trance that unmasked spies from several nations around my flat in Bucaramanga, I published for my Muslim and Hindu spies, from one of my accounts for AI-generated images, a theological explanation of the reasons why I then consumed alcohol: “I am a Christian, and we accept wine in order to honour our Saviour, who died for our secret sins.”

Within minutes I began to receive messages on my mobile phone from hackers apologising for having persecuted me. They had had my devices and computers tapped, recording every detail of my private life, and the only thing they found was the life of a person like themselves: with no ill intentions, a stranger to intrigue, respectful of the law and of others.

In 2012, the sense of the catastrophe hanging over Chennai would present itself to me as it had in 2001: whether I should condemn or forgive. Should I not, now, therefore, intercede for the Hindus?

The Earthquake of 11 April

On 11 April 2012, after meditating on the psalms, I lay down for a moment. The heat enveloped the city, but in my flat the ceiling fan maintained a gentle breeze. I fell asleep.

I awoke to screams. Women, children, men were running along the corridors. The fan swung violently from side to side. The lamps jingled; the crockery inside the cupboards rattled against itself. The whole thing lasted, according to my perception, around a minute and a half, perhaps a little more. It was an 8.5 magnitude earthquake, one of the strongest recorded in the world.

I got up and tried to go to the balcony, but the grille blocked my way. Through the bars I managed to see people moving like a

disturbed anthill. Cars were braking sharply; some were praying aloud, no one was cursing. I felt calm and lucid.

I made my way towards the kitchen, guided by an angel, who told me the building would collapse, that I would survive unharmed and be rescued. But that idea immediately became unacceptable to me. Why resign myself to the loss of so many innocents, to the destruction of an entire city, when the very Lord who rules the earth had granted me ALL his blessings?

I turned back, spoke to Him and, pointing with my hand to the flame in the heart of Jesus, exclaimed:

—God! You can stop this earthquake! You have said that you love me! Have mercy on us!

At that instant the shaking ceased.

The lamps stopped trembling; the building recovered its vertical stillness. The silence that followed had a special density; a stillness charged with presence. For the sceptic, such a thing may be classified as yet another coincidence. For me it was another certainty: my prayer had been heard.

An immense joy flooded me. I felt the lightness of one who has seen an abyss close a few steps from his feet. I looked at the clock: I had a class at three in the afternoon. I showered, put on a clean shirt, picked up my materials and went out.

On the pavement I came across a woman running in terror.

—Tsunami! —she cried—. The tsunami is coming again!

I approached her gently. I myself had seen the images of the 2004 tsunami that had devastated South-East Asia. I understood her fear.

—Calm yourself —I told her—. There will be no tsunami.

She stopped, looked at me fixedly and, as if something in my expression inspired confidence, sobbed:

—You are telling the truth! Thank you! Thank you!

I went on my way. At every step I saw contorted faces, whole families leaving their buildings for fear of aftershocks. I walked, spreading serenity to those who looked at me; the certainty of having been heard sustained me.

When I reached the Faculty I ran into Mr Hachat. His face was tense.

—Where were you? —he shouted in front of several students—. There was an earthquake here!

I looked at him, perplexed. His question made no sense: everyone had felt the tremor. What irritated him was my calmness. He realised at once how absurd he sounded and yet, instead of correcting himself, he vented his anger:

—You may go! Everyone has already left! There are no classes today!

I went back to the flat and found hundreds of people crying in the streets. Some were embracing; others stared at the sky with mistrust and fear. I could not bear to see so much distress. I went

back up to my floor, knelt again before the altar and said:

—Lord!
Have mercy on us!

This time the

voice I heard had a different tone. It was not the sweetness of the Son, but the severity of the Creator who speaks in the Old Testament, the same force that Hindus describe as Shiva and Muslims as Allah. A force that destroys in order to purify.

—Have they had mercy on the just? —He asked.

That question went through me like a lightning bolt. I understood, with painful clarity, that my journeys through the world had taken place among serpents and hyenas, and that only divine protection had kept me from disappearing years earlier.

I thought of Moses before Pharaoh, of the plagues that brought down Egypt's arrogance, an episode I have studied and recreated in my book *Historia Cifrada*. When Pharaoh's army lay destroyed, the slaves of the pyramids, not only the Israelites, rose up; chaos spread across Egypt. The famous Papyrus of the Tribulations, kept in Holland, relates how the slaves began to wear their masters' jewels.



The destruction of the oppressive power opened the way to a new stage for humanity.

In Tamil tradition, Shiva fulfils the same role: every certain number of millennia he descends, incarnated in an avatar, to destroy bandits, intriguers and those who pretend to help the poor while enriching themselves at their expense. Allah, in the Qur'an, punishes without hesitation those who mock the revelation. The God of the Old Testament razes cities devoured by injustice. The New Testament shows us Jesus as a meek lamb, but also as a terrible judge who will return with fire to judge the living and the dead. All these figures converge in a single reality: the Last Judgement, which the Lord has asked me to announce through my work.

—Which just? —I managed to stammer.

I knew very well to whom He referred. God had sent me to each country as His prophet, to teach a straight soul in the midst of so much generalised intrigue, so many lies, and for that reason, in each society, my life was ridiculed, attacked or persecuted. I thought of my friends in India, those I had chosen to love despite their faults and meanness.

—But they are my generation, Lord —I said at last—. They are terrified by the earthquakes. Forgive them!

Then the voice of the Creator was moved by my intercession, seeing that, despite so many mishaps, my heart held no trace of hatred towards them, whether friends, false friends or enemies.

—Very well —He said—; the earthquakes shall cease. But the diseases will come.

That sentence would herald the pandemic of 2020, a modern plague that paralysed the planet.

The presence of God was so intense that it left me exhausted. Staggering, I reached the edge of the bed and fell into a deep sleep. When I awoke, hours later, a message would bring a different test, more intimate and more beautiful.

My Mother's Heart

Around five in the afternoon I checked my emails. There was one from my father:

'Hello children. I want you to know about your Mummy's operation... Yesterday, after the surgery, she had a small heart attack, according to what the doctors tell me. Dr Martha Trillos, who was the anaesthetist, decided she should be taken to the Intensive Care Unit, to keep her under constant observation... It seems they're going to schedule her for next week to do a catheterisation, to be sure whether there is a blockage in the veins and see what course to follow. I love you very much, children.'

I had no idea that my mother was due for surgery. I went back to the inner sanctuary of the flat and meditated.

—It is she who wishes to leave —the Lord told me.

I called her: "Mum!". I saw her young, radiant, wearing a light dress from another time. She smiled briefly at me and then turned her back; her longing was to be reunited with my little sister, Jeannette Cristina. I called Jeannette. She shrugged her shoulders:

—She doesn't want to listen to me.

I turned my attention back to the Lord:

—I beg you to save her. Do not let her go!

—Her time has come to an end —He replied.

—But she is my mother!

There was a dense silence. Then the voice said:

—If I grant your pleas, you will regret it.

—I don't care!

—Are you willing to sacrifice the recognition that awaits you in Cannes?

In an instant I understood what He meant. *Hamlet Unbound* was advancing in the Festival. It was the work of my life, the synthesis of years of writing, clandestine shoots, privations and sacrifices. But what was a red carpet compared with my mother's wellbeing?

—Yes, Lord —I answered—. I have never sought fame.

—So be it.

I picked up the phone and called Colombia.

—Dad —I said—, do not authorise the catheterisation for Mum.

—Why not?

—The Lord Jesus is going to heal her.

My father, a reasonable and prudent man, nevertheless perceived the force with which I spoke. The Holy Spirit was with him. He agreed. The doctors, as I later learnt, were indignant; they made

him sign a form in which he assumed responsibility for my mother's possible death.

A week later they performed a new examination. The doctors looked at one another in disbelief.

—Impossible! —they exclaimed—. She has the heart of a fifteen-year-old girl!

The cardiologist, Dr Cossio, later told a medical board that the previous electrocardiogram showed arrhythmias and signs of a heart attack; the new graph was perfect. In order to preserve their logic, they concluded that the first machine must have suffered an electronic malfunction. Whoever wishes to verify this can consult the records at the Foscil Clinic. The reports are there.

Some time later I spoke with my mother. She acknowledged that, before the heart attack, she had wanted to say farewell to this world. The sudden appearance of her deceased parents, standing by her suitcases, startled her.

—What are you doing, girl? —my grandfather Rafael scolded her—. What nonsense is this, going about wishing for death?

My grandmother Carmen looked at her sternly over his shoulder, with that blend of reproach and tenderness that always characterised her.

—Pick up that suitcase and go back —she told her.

The authority of her parents held her back. The sacrifice I had offered from Chennai was accepted.

The years confirmed that protection. Today, as I write these pages, my mother has come through another complicated procedure —a valve replacement— and, together with my father, enjoys a state of health that astonishes the doctors. She is eighty-one; he is eighty-four. They walk, think and move about with ease. I have come to tell them they will live as long as they wish and that, when the time comes, it will be they who ask me to pray for their departure. That longevity is one of the infinite blessings God has granted me.

And yet the Lord had warned me: "If I grant your pleas, you will regret it." The regret manifested itself in another way. My mother, now back home, began to see a psychiatrist who attributed her visions to mere chemical discharges in the brain. Little by little she came to the conclusion that everything that had happened in ICU had been no more than post-operative delirium and machine failure. Whenever

we touched on the subject, she adopted the sceptical tone of certain Old Testament passages:

—If God helps you so much, how is it that you haven't amassed wealth? —she would repeat—. Pepito is already a millionaire and has two daughters.

—Pepito was accused of embezzling public funds.

—But in the end he was acquitted.

In time she mislaid many of my religious images: holy cards, pictures, the calendar of Jesus which the Lord wanted me to place by my desk, and which I have now replaced with a small sculpture.

The years that followed were marked by persecutions, slanders and spiritual attacks. However, I have never lacked the basics to survive, I have not gone in want and, when I contemplate my parents' faces, I feel amply compensated



It is the Book of Job, or as the mystic poet writes:

My Beloved, do you consent that I should double your sorrows? Of course, provided that you double your loves.

I accept that the trials multiply, for with them intimacy with the Lord grows. The delays in the recognition of my work only enlarge the joy I shall experience when, finally, He Himself vindicates it before men.

Hymns to Jesus: The Diseases Will Come

Months after these events, the Lord asked me to set down these experiences first in the form of poems. From that command were born the *Hymns to Jesus*, which reached Rome in the summer of 2012 and were read by Pope Benedict XVI as he was already preparing his resignation. Among those texts was “The Diseases Will Come”, whose core I transcribe below:

*And I shall abandon the false prophets —He told me—
those who tried to lead you away from the Truth.*

*And I saw the men and women of this earth
with whom I had shared so many days.
I argued that they were not devoid of nobility;
in defending them I fell into a deep torpor.*

*When I awoke the buildings were moving:
it was the wrath of Shiva when the Lord withdraws.
But the cries of the women pierced my heart;
for your blessings, Lord, return, I begged,
and the blocks of concrete were calmed,
waves of Capernaum after the storm.*

*“For I am already leaving those who despise me.”
“They are my generation,” Lord, I insisted.
“The earthquakes will diminish,” He consoled me,
“but the diseases will come.*

With time I understood that the global plague, the paralysis of the cities, the overcrowded hospitals and the massive campaigns of fear were the visible expression of that sentence. God had restrained the telluric punishment; humanity, however, chose the path of impiety towards the just, the cause of widespread sickness, both physical and spiritual.

Engineers of Heaven and New Tools

In one of my poems, the Lord announced that He would send into this generation “reincarnated engineers” who would provide me with tools to complete my work. That promise was fulfilled in unexpected ways.

For decades my books were rejected by publishers who feared their content. Then Amazon appeared with its self-publishing system. Suddenly, closed doors opened: I could place my texts within reach of any reader in the world without inquisitorial intermediaries.

Film producers denied me funding; yet advances in artificial intelligence now make it possible to create images, sequences and edits without depending on the old industry. What so many bureaucrats strove to prevent, God restores through other channels.

Artificial intelligence, in that sense, forms part of the tools promised: programmers, engineers, anonymous mathematicians who, without knowing it, collaborate with the mission of a poet who years ago announced the coming of these instruments. No algorithm can take the place of inspiration; but they can serve as hammers, chisels and brushes to shape what the Spirit dictates.

Grandfather Bergrana and the Betrayal of a Generation

In July 2012, my student Loki —from a well-off caste in Chennai and with an impeccable command of English— introduced me to his grandfather, Mr Bergrana, a former local ruler. I remember the surprise his humble flat caused me: simple furniture, few ornaments, a respectful silence. Nothing suggested a powerful past. His greatness could be felt in his gaze, in the serenity with which he listened and in the clarity of his words.

We spoke at length. I told him about the divine manifestations I had experienced the previous year. To my amazement, he said they matched the oldest principles of Tamil philosophy, which goes back three thousand years and is found in the original *Mahabharata*. He was precisely translating that Tamil version into English and preparing a study to demonstrate that the famous poem had been plagiarised by the peoples of the north, who rewrote it in Sanskrit. In his writings he affirmed that the ultimate destiny of every Hindu is to be united with the divinity, to become a god through purification.

When I spoke to him of my visions, he listened with attention and respect.

—They coincide with the most ancient Tamil theology —he said—, the most secret one, the one that almost no one wants to remember.

He showed me a few chapters; I understood that he was on a spiritual level far above that of his descendants. Mr Bergrana's children, and Loki himself, mocked his beliefs behind his back. They considered them superstitions. They had been colonised by Western positivism and by the scepticism of contemporary universities, which —as Swedenborg said— have become bastions of spiritual ignorance. They strove to measure everything with surveys, statistics and algorithms, but distrusted mystical experience.

Through Loki I learnt that, shortly before his death, Mr Bergrana had asked him to keep me close and to secure a stable position for me in India. He wanted us to work together, for me to expand in my novels the spiritual vision of the Tamil tradition. Loki promised to obey. Yet, advised by his parents and by bureaucrats who were following my work closely, he did the opposite. During the pandemic he pretended to offer me a job opportunity in order, in reality, to set a trap. When the pandemic suddenly worsened in India and his intrigues failed, he went so far as to threaten to send people to destroy me. None of those attempts prospered; they were all dismantled by Providence. Loki himself died a few months later, as I relate in another chapter.

Just last night, in fact, Mr Bergrana visited me in a dream to reaffirm that his intentions towards me had always been upright. His pain came from the betrayal of his descendants, who, seduced by academic prestige and promises of power, despised his wisdom. In that generational rift the crisis of humanity is reflected: children who believe themselves more enlightened than their parents, nations that scorn their spiritual roots and systems that ridicule everything that cannot be quantified.

When I told Thomas what had happened during the earthquake, he not only believed my words but reminded me of the shrine that existed on a corner of the Film School campus.

—You are treading on sacred ground, dedicated to the Holy Virgin Mary! —he told me.

—But the new owners are not Christians —I replied—. Why have they not removed it?

—Are you mad? —he exclaimed—. In India, destroying a shrine to a foreign god is considered the worst of errors. Great misfortunes befall those who mock any divinity, whether it be Lord Murugan or the Virgin Mary.

When I returned to my faculty I related what had happened to my dean, Mr Bankras, who prided himself on being an atheist. He came out with refined sarcasms, to which I replied with theological arguments.



In the end we parted on cordial terms. One might have thought he would forget my comments, but the next day a team of builders and priests were working in the centre of campus, in front of my building.

—What are they doing? —I asked Thomas.

—They are erecting a shrine to Lord Ganesha —he replied, pointing to a huge statue of the elephant-headed god.

I, Petrus Romanus_____

The Deflected Cyclone and the Judgement on Pondicherry

I showed Grandfather Bergrana my text on cinema and my film about corruption in Colombia and, to my surprise, the following month he invited me to dinner to discuss them.

—I find your observations on cinema from an epistemological standpoint very solid —he told me—, and what I find most innovative is your approach to film from the perspective of universal theatre.

We then discussed *Colombia Corrupta* (*Corrupt Colombia*):

—It has continuity —he said, brightening my evening—, excellent lighting and very profound dialogue. But I am surprised they haven't killed you for denouncing corruption in your country.

I explained that the film had gone practically unnoticed, although it had been commented on by the National University's radio station.

—Is that not enough? —he said—. There are films that are screened and no one comments on them.

—They criticised flaws in the acting —I said—, and with reason. Most of the actors did not learn their lines and we had to use cue cards so they could read the text.

—That is something only experts in film know —he consoled me—. In any case, it is a great step that you have brought the issue of corruption into cinema. Your compatriots can see that the problem does not lie with the politicians but with themselves.

It was shortly after the April experience that I travelled for two months to Canada and the United States.

My contract with the Film School was due to end on 31 October, a date much cherished by sorcerers and spiritists. In the novel I am writing about India I shall recount in detail what happened that day. It will suffice here to say that certain gurus and priests, in alliance with my enemies, tried to manipulate a cyclone and hurl it over Chennai. I, who was already packing my belongings to leave the flat, saw in a vision the mass of cloud approaching like a colossal battering ram.

Once again I invoked the Lord Jesus Christ. And once again He intervened. The cyclone veered towards Pondicherry, the seaside resort from which my adversaries were sending their curses against

_____Hugo Noël Santander Ferreira

me, without considering that, in order to destroy me, they would have to devastate their own city. The local newspaper the following day recorded the event with a revealing sentence:

"... fortunately there are no reports of any major damage in and around Chennai despite heavy rains and strong winds."

The city suffered only heavy rain and strong winds. Pondicherry, by contrast, received the main blow. Thus does God perform His unexpected turns: those who wish to destroy end up facing the fury of the elements they themselves tried to manipulate.

Nilam intensifies into severe cyclonic storm, makes landfall at Mahabalipuram

There are no reports of any major damage in and around Chennai despite heavy rains and strong winds. Send us your photos and videos

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The sea condition will be rough along and off TN, Puducherry and AP coasts during the next 36 hour.



PTI
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11. Truth and Goodness Make Us Free

I write and publish books grounded in the films I watch and in my readings on the physical and spiritual world: not only Plato and Blake, Aeschylus, Racine and Marlowe, but also Bergman and George Lucas.

There were two great intellectual impressions that I had as a child. The first was at the age of four, when I learned of King Solomon's petition to God: he asked for wisdom instead of wealth. I understood his request at once and said:



"I too want to learn all the wonders of Your creation, my Lord."
Since then my life has been devoted, in a magical way, to learning.

Borges, one of my dearest masters, lived happily reading books in different languages—languages that I adopted as my own on my path towards knowledge. A child of the first global generation, I lived the blessing of learning and working in many countries, languages and continents. The path has not been easy, for those who follow their inner voice must walk a tightrope over abysses in order to become gods—or, as Nietzsche preferred to call them, supermen.

Since Babel, language has been the principal cause of division among men, for ignorance of it strengthens social prejudices, which end up being venerated and respected as cultural values. The study of languages has cured me – to employ Unamuno's expression – of xenophobia and nationalism.

The second impression came when I was fourteen. I read a scholastic book by Thomas Aquinas, who maintained that any man is endowed by God to understand and carry out any trade in life.

I was an atheist for a time too, following the fashion of universities; for they tend to be as arrogant as they are convinced they possess worldly physical truths which become—so Swedenborg prescribes—bulwarks of spiritual intolerance. Even so, faith remained like a gentle breeze in a scorching desert, and I took life, with its dreams and questions, as my path towards knowledge.

Each of us has a personal calling to succeed, whether for a selfish end or for a long-term benefit to humanity, the fruit of our own fulfilment as spiritual beings. But to reach the second aim it is necessary to live with certainty of our eternity. In this area, I know it, I have the blessing of having already died and risen again, as well as the disadvantage of living in solitude because of my closeness to God, just as Kierkegaard wrote in his beautiful book about Abraham's solitude and abandonment: *Fear and Trembling*.

I do not believe in nations; I believe in men, because I am not a man, but humanity itself. For I tell you that our ego ends with death. In the beyond you discover that you have only two options: to merge with the universe, becoming one with others and with God, or to wander as a lost soul, imprisoned in its banal worldly aspirations. What will your choice be? My books, films and plays can guide you along the way.

"But what would the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth be like?" people ask me.

God asks me to write for you an *Auto de Fe*.

I, Petrus Romanus_____

The Kingdom of Heaven on Earth

An atrium, and several chairs arranged in a semicircle.
At the back, choirs made up of various animal species from the
Land of Truth: spectacled bears, cockroaches, tanagers, moths, flying
squirrels and multicoloured toads.

CHORUS OF COCKROACHES

*In the sacred precinct of the Land of Truth,
a chorus of sincere voices intones its song.
An Auto de Fe for those who long for illumination,
devotees of truth in the promised Jerusalem.
The President, in wisdom, leads the way:
a semicircle where later you must take your seats.*

*They speak of trusting nature, of divine faith,
and of how the poison of hypocrisy fades away.
In Colombia, land of literary bears and radiant toads,
they sought to banish the light that dispelled hypocrisy
from those who, in shadow, engendered falsehoods.*

*But the Prophet stood firm; his victory they acclaim.
The battle Hugo Noël fought—alone, in a fierce struggle
against the whole world—he won through his rooted faith
in God and in His dominion over the living and the dead.
In the creed of Truth, where the flag of love flies,
among men and the mistreated animal species,
we gather in this sacred atrium, an embrace of space,
forging a creed for those who long for truth,
banishing the cobweb of the dark kingdom of falsehood.*

CHORUS OF SPECTACLED BEARS

Lack of trust in the grace of nature sows

_____Hugo Noël Santander Ferreira

*a world where the struggle for power darkens the humble,
where just voices fear to speak freely,
and truth is not dared to be proclaimed aloud.*

PRESIDENT OF THE LAND OF TRUTH

*Remember the coldness towards Martin Luther King,
when he denounced the silence of the good.
Not even his shed blood was enough to make them speak.*

CHORUS OF MULTICOLOURED TOADS

*In this age of hypocrisy and its deceitful dance,
where those who hide their plots in shadow
move as we do through the contracted span of forests...*

CHORUS OF FLYING SQUIRRELS

*The spiders who weave power speak to us
of a world where falsehood triumphs day after day,
where those who denounce lies are threatened.*

CHORUS OF TANAGERS

*The media, with their favoured and partial narratives,
promote fears of death, both dark and fragile.
Through novels, series and stories they intend
that not even the bravest writer confront his wicked kings.*

CHORUS OF MOTHS

*The wisdom of Shaw, in these jaded times,
forged heroes like Joan of Arc, who denounced the lie.
Diogenes relates that a certain philosopher prescribed,
like Machiavelli, that the wicked outstrip the honest.*

CHORUS OF MULTICOLOURED TOADS

But such dramas end beneath the anointing of Hugo Noël,

I, Petrus Romanus_____

*with whom the Risen Jesus chose to return
to dethrone hypocrisy and enthrone the just,
so that the virtuous may exile the conspirators.*

CHORUS OF SPECTACLED BEARS

*I foresee that he will judge the lives of rulers,
that the pious will find health before Hugo Noël,
and that the intriguers will fall beneath the mantle of love,
for the light of virtue is his aegis and his will.*

CHORUS OF FLYING SQUIRRELS

*The perverse said that Hugo Noël Santander Ferreira
would meet his end for having little standing and wealth,
scant influence and exalted enemies.
Yet both a Queen and a Pope fell in his path.*



CHORUS OF TANAGERS

*His majesty flows from refusing money, fame or power.
Each time he is attacked, a curse is unleashed.*

_____ Hugo Noël Santander Ferreira

*Great miseries strike those who pursue him;
their falls, beneath avenging skies, come in chains.*

CHORUS OF MOTHS

*Only the Creator would undertake so grand a battle.
At the fair in Bucaramanga they sought to torture him;
a divine storm sealed their macabre designs.*

CHORUS OF TANAGERS

*They cannot harm him; even the Divine Child,
a guru of India, saw within Hugo's heart.
From cubicle three his innocence shone in majesty.
He protects him, guards his life, his precious word.*

CHORUS OF FLYING SQUIRRELS

*With faith, Noël bound his heart to that of Jesus,
to that of God, and in His love—wounded by so many
betrayals—
he is one with Allah, fused in the Holy Spirit.
One God: praise and faith, immaculate.*

PRESIDENT OF THE LAND OF TRUTH

*In that fateful week, drawn away by distractions,
he wandered lost along paths that destiny had traced.
The hand of a shepherd, it is said, led him astray:
his errant steps, a plan divinely wrought.*

CHORUS OF MULTICOLOURED TOADS

*Errors often serve a purpose not yet shown.
We know that the Lord drew him away from his pursuers,
guiding him along mistaken paths, beneath a mask of
shadows,
to protect him from a plot, a carefully woven scheme.*

I, Petrus Romanus_____

CHORUS OF MOTHS

*The misfortunes that afflict the just cry out to you:
they are blessings in disguise, for they grant
protection, well-being and happiness. Water them:
in trials and tribulations they grow and bear fruit.*

PRESIDENT OF THE LAND OF TRUTH

*Entertainment—the deceitful song of journalists—
depicts a lie, a narrative so mistaken:
“That noble souls perish if they dare to proclaim
the farces of the powerful before the multitude.”*

CHORUS OF SPECTACLED BEARS

*For those who fear inevitable, relieving death,
this is a terror; but not for us, immortal beings.
The beyond protects those who, through our days,
recognise ourselves as infinite, children of the immortal God.*

CHORUS OF FLYING SQUIRRELS

*The now-failed Conclave of the Black Pope
sought to banish truth and nobility from the Church,
excommunicating those who never fall silent before evil
and the enslaving manipulation of power.*

CHORUS OF MOTHS

*Many bishops, vilely citing Saint Matthew,
justified their dark attachment to intrigue:
“I send you as sheep among wolves,” they preached;
“be shrewd as serpents and innocent as doves.”*

CHORUS OF MULTICOLOURED TOADS

But those accomplices ignored the French Revolution,

_____Hugo Noël Santander Ferreira

*for Equality, Liberty and Fraternity belong to Jesus
and to His Prophet, the apostle who denied Him three times
and asked to return.*

CHORUS OF MULTICOLOURED TOADS

*The sun we receive today, we joyfully proclaim:
it is good, though fleeting, and it always returns.
The bread that feeds us—bountiful—always returns;
the air we breathe—abundant—always returns.*

CHORUS OF MULTICOLOURED TOADS

*In the same way, the prophets of God always return.
We are the salt of the earth, as Jesus revealed,
reluctant to take part in inhuman violence,
opposed to wars and to seeds of hatred yet to come.*

*Noël has already condemned the violent in Colombia,
and since the twelfth of August no innocent has died.
His word has already condemned those who conspire
against humanity, planning nuclear attacks.*

CHORUS OF TANAGERS

*In this world of conflict, where shadow spreads,
some cling to power, clothed in violence.
But violence begets new violence:
he who kills in shadow is punished in shadow.*

CHORUS OF SPECTACLED BEARS

*Behold the presumption of those who threatened Noël:
they found their end; their fates collected their debts.
They did not heed the curse Jesus proclaimed:
woe to those who harm one of these innocents!*

*I, Petrus Romanus*_____

CHORUS OF SPECTACLED BEARS

*Innocents not only children, but also His saints and prophets.
Children who renounced becoming adults in order to enter
heaven.*

*Better for them to bind a rock around their neck
and be thrown face-down to the bottom of a pond.*

CHORUS OF MOTHS

*The innocence of children is a legacy of wisdom.
There is a reward for those who seek God.
Testimony, through the wide journey of life,
is Hugo's passage: his reward, Jesus Himself.*

CHORUS OF SPECTACLED BEARS

*Noël will question every king by the grace of God.
No longer will intermediate ministers be judged,
but the pharaohs who, in mansions hidden underground,
believe they can escape heaven's judgement.*

CHORUS OF MULTICOLOURED TOADS

*Monks conspired when Noël delivered his message
in the abbey of Pittsburgh, where he humbly lodged.
But they failed, and heavenly wrath does not wait:
their repentance is urgent before their imminent end.*

CHORUS OF FLYING SQUIRRELS

*As Zeus struck against Troy's facade,
so the Risen Jesus raged against those who
plotted to torture and murder His last prophet.
Kings, popes and former rectors hastened their own end.*

CHORUS OF MOTHS

In a world that praises the powerful, the famous and the rich,

_____ *Hugo Noël Santander Ferreira*

*that sings their praises in grand fanfare,
I reveal that only a treacherous pit is their destination,
for fame, power and money they sacrifice their later well-
being.*

CHORUS OF TANAGERS

*They sell their souls for a visa or a bribe,
emulating Cain and Judas, betraying their principles.
The wrath and malice of their hearts twist them:
their souls, putrid as carrion, will lie in furrows.*

CHORUS OF FLYING SQUIRRELS

*They attack the just with the creed of poison;
but sooner or later others will poison them.
Violence and deceit feed their lives,
and in their lives they reap what they have sown.*

CHORUS OF MULTICOLOURED TOADS

*That is why it is difficult to find noble politicians, bankers
or honest actors in Hollywood: they are rare.
They, who have reached heights at others' expense,
crush the innocent and the pure, revealing their imposture.*

CHORUS OF SPECTACLED BEARS

*They build their rise on the backs of the noble and the wise.
They amass wealth by defrauding the honest and the poor.
They gain reputation by ruining innocents,
burning dreams and hopes: thus they contaminate.*

CHORUS OF FLYING SQUIRRELS

*Understand why Francis Xavier renounced the world
before converting under Ignatius of Loyola:
"What does it profit to conquer the world," says the Gospel,*

I, Petrus Romanus_____

if in the process you lose your immortal soul?

CHORUS OF TANAGERS

*Or, to put it in the inspired words
of the holiest and wisest gurus of India:
those who conquer the world are ambitious,
but he who conquers God is the wisest.*

CHORUS OF TANAGERS

*Those who organise public corruptions
invoke demons whom darkness itself contorts.
Lies, intrigue and conspiracy within their own house:
betrayals of power and illnesses will be their harvest.*

CHORUS OF MOTHS

*They violate and harass children; they bind their victims.
Then they use that dark past for blackmail,
fostering lust and lovelessness in daily life.*

CHORUS OF MULTICOLOURED TOADS

*But those innocents will heal; their souls will shine
through the compassionate intervention of the Risen Christ.*

That story, which turned my puberty into a living hell, is recorded *grosso modo* in my novel *New Manhattan Soirées* (1999). In the series of novels featuring Marco Saint-André, I will detail the refinement of that harassment, which drove its victims to become victimisers, guilty of their own defilement.

I began working in 2021 at a Roman university, remotely; jealous forces did not take long to harass me there: I was insulted, subjected to public ridicule, overloaded with work and unjustly dismissed. The lecturer who attacked me most died a few months later; I regret the bad fortune that so often befalls those who hate me for my closeness to God.

_____Hugo Noël Santander Ferreira

During the pandemic my wife, Leyla Margarita Tobías, and I founded Santaley Publishing, through which we have published more than fifty books on Amazon. My prolific catalogue, in English and Spanish, irritated the literary bureaucrats of Bogotá 2022, who could not conceive that a province such as Bucaramanga might be the cradle of a cosmopolitan writer.

Hindus contacted me then with the aim of taking revenge for the failed attempts to destroy me in 2012—those they had summoned against me through spiritual arts in Madras and Hyderabad. It was then that Loki, citing his grandfather's dying wish, offered me tickets to work in India as a film director, with a salary of five thousand dollars a month. I feared it might be a trap and placed the decision to travel in God's hands. Then COVID-19 worsened and the Hindus, fearing Shiva's wrath, drew back.

Loki later called to ask me for a script in which a group of students like him would confront Ashwatthama, the immortal demon of the Mahabharata, guided by a guru inspired by his grandfather, who had died in 2017. As I wrote, I sympathised more and more with Ashwatthama for in his immortality he argued for a world without debts between nations, with equal opportunities for education and development; he even founded a free university on an island for the best students in the world. At the end of the second act, Ashwatthama unmasked Loki's tutor, who had pretended to admire him.

I then realised that I was writing my own story: faced with failed attempts to destroy me, and unable to recognise the majesty of Shiva in a foreigner, some Hindus associated me with the fearsome Ashwatthama.

I asked Loki for an advance of three thousand dollars, which he vehemently refused, insisting that I hand over the complete script revealing the secret of how to kill an immortal. Understanding his deceit, I told him not to invite misfortune, that he already knew the power that had been bestowed upon me.

Loki then insulted me in an unworthy manner. He even threatened to shame me publicly, claiming that I did not know "how powerful he himself was."

Later he wrote to me with a certain cordiality, accusing me of wanting to charge him for something we had not agreed upon, to which I replied even more kindly that, in that case, I would ask God to collect that debt from him.

He never replied. A prolonged and painful illness ended his life a few months later ended his life a few months later.

Only those who cultivate their spirit and do not fear death—doorway to other worlds—attain nirvana. They are those who, as Shakespeare wrote, having suffered everything, suffer nothing. Whoever acts wrongly exposes himself to calamities if he punishes the just. They offend Goodness and Love, the pair that governs the universe and takes flesh in all gods.

The ancient Greeks lived with this certainty and, when the Athenians exterminated the inhabitants of the island of Melos simply because they could, the wise warned them of imminent punishment. The priestesses of Apollo at Delphi, who ingested hallucinogenic plants to see the future—as is done in Mexico with peyote or in Colombia with the root called yagé—confirmed that a calamity would fall upon Athens because of that massacre. Then a plague struck them, which science still does not fully understand. What horrified them most was that it did not spread to other territories.

“Why us?” they asked. And they answered themselves: “Because of the innocents we sacrificed in Melos.” Nations still feel perplexed when they learn that Colombia was scarcely affected by COVID-19.

King of Kings – Seventh Cantic – Unlike Jesus Christ

*Unlike the biblical Jesus Christ, I tell you:
“Do not act any longer like foxes and serpents.
We are children of God, with voice and cords
to denounce the lie.*

*Love your enemy
more than yourself.”
At FILBO 22, a foreign publishing house
attempted to manipulate my work.*

*But what pleases me most, in speaking
with scholars and seekers of truth—
theologians, Franciscans, Thomists, gurus from India,*

*from Turkey, from Brazil—
is seeing how many are aware of my writings
and of the angels that surround them.*

It is enough to read the biographies of those who cultivate the desire to dominate through power, fame or money to recognise their bitterness. As a rule they boast of happiness and, as proof, perform circus tricks from the comfort of their wealth, or display luxury and wastefulness in heavy-handed jokes. But did Herod, murderer of children, meet an honourable end?

Did Kant not end demented, living on the compassion of his fellow citizens? Was it not Kant himself who proclaimed that compassion must be banished from reason, and who raged against a student who married for love rather than interest?

How did Fidel Castro die—agonising through half a lifetime after sealing a pact that prolonged his days, paid for with the sacrifice of a forsaken elephant in Africa?

This chapter was added as a result of certain alterations suffered by my manuscripts. At the Bogotá International Book Fair 2022, my personal drive was seized for almost fifteen hours. The manuscript of the previously published chapters reappeared altered, with additions and changes of words: they sought to present me as an offender of religions, as someone who provoked Hindus by mocking their respect for cows, or who displayed exaggerated vanity. They even used biblical quotations I had never mentioned as evidence of a supposed planned suicide.

Later I noticed that my files would revert to earlier versions despite my corrections. I wiped my external drive and changed servers and social networks until I once again felt in control of my files and programmes.

INTERVIEW: The Poet Who Speaks from the Fissure

The studio is sober, almost ascetic. White walls, natural light entering through a high window. No screens are switched on. A light wooden table, two chairs facing each other. On the table: an analogue

*I, Petrus Romanus*_____

recorder, a Moleskine notebook, and a Bible worn from use. Outside, the distant murmur of a European city in winter.

Characters

MIA SCANNER, cultural journalist. Calm voice, attentive gaze.

THE AUTHOR, writer and filmmaker. Composed, precise, without emphasis.

MIA SCANNER

Let us begin at the beginning. In your book you mention two foundational impressions: one at the age of four, linked to King Solomon, and another at fourteen, linked to Thomas Aquinas. How do you remember those moments today?



THE
AUTHOR

I do not remember them as epiphanies or as spectacular scenes. They were silent moments, moments of listening and attention. At the age of four I first heard the story of Solomon asking for wisdom rather than wealth. That choice struck

me as immediately evident and just. I understood it without effort, as

_____ *Hugo Noël Santander Ferreira*

one recognises a simple truth. I knew then that knowledge was worth more than any material accumulation. From that moment on, learning became the axis of my life.

MIA SCANNER

And the second impression, that of Thomas Aquinas?

THE AUTHOR

At fourteen I chose my readings intuitively. I was not looking for ready-made answers, but for intellectual presences. Reading Thomas Aquinas, I understood how profoundly intellectual effort can transform a person. Sometimes it took me an entire day to understand a single page, dictionary in hand. That effort revealed an essential idea to me: the human being is potential. Capable of learning any trade and understanding any field of knowledge. To be a child of God does not mean to be omnipotent, but to be radically open.

MIA SCANNER

You define yourself as “a child of the first global generation”. What does that mean to you?

THE AUTHOR

I was born into a world that began to speak to itself. I grew up with the idea that languages are not borders but bridges. I am fluent in Spanish, English and French; I have taught and published in those languages. I lived in Portugal, where I spoke Portuguese with the familiarity of a neighbouring tongue. I read German and Russian, and I have studied more than twenty-four languages, including Latin and Tamil. Borges taught me that each language is a different way of breathing the world.

MIA SCANNER

Your *Auto de Fe* has been described as baroque and provocative. Did you conceive it as a theatrical work?

THE AUTHOR

Yes, from the outset. It was conceived to be performed. The model is Calderón and *The Great Theatre of the World*. I chose animals as choirs because original innocence resides in them, as it does in

*I, Petrus Romanus*_____

children. It does not reside in power or ideology. In a recent mystical experience, Pachamama appeared to me as weariness, not as vengeance, but as a warning: the Earth does not belong to us.

MIA SCANNER

In New Manhattan Soirées you recount sexual abuse suffered in childhood. Why make this public?

THE AUTHOR

I did so as early as 1999, without naming names, at a time when hardly anyone dared to speak of such things. Today I name the religious order, not out of revenge, but out of fidelity to historical truth. The scandals that later erupted in different countries merely confirmed what I had already written. Silence protects the aggressor; words protect time.

MIA SCANNER

The death of Loki appears in your narrative as a karmic consequence. Do you fear it may be read as a celebration?

THE AUTHOR

I celebrate no one's death. I simply record sequences. Spiritual causality does not function like human revenge. It functions as a law, impersonal and inexorable. Observing that law does not mean rejoicing in it.

MIA SCANNER

Some readers speak of messianic delusion. How do you respond to that accusation?

THE AUTHOR

If that were the case, I would have been institutionalised long ago. They tried. They failed. Every time they try, something happens in the external world. These are not words, but facts. I proclaim nothing. Events precede me and surround me.

MIA SCANNER

Do you believe we are living through the end of times?

_____ *Hugo Noël Santander Ferreira*

THE AUTHOR

I believe we are living through the beginning of other times. Hypocrisy is wearing itself out. Paradoxically, artificial intelligence will accelerate truth. It will make lies, inconsistencies and behaviours visible. It will show who acts with integrity and who acts against it. That, in my view, is what is coming.

Mia Scanner switches off the recorder.

Light from the window falls across the table.

The Bible remains open.

End of the interview.



12. Being a Christian under a Pope who does not believe in God

The Arian heresy—that which holds that Jesus was nothing more than a mere man who died crucified, and that if he rose again it was only to depart far from this world, leaving us scarcely an ethic of goodness—has spread like a spiritual cancer not only within the Catholic Church, but also in the arts, philosophy, and knowledge. I do not say this with the lightness of a polemicist, but with the horror of one who sees the denial of Christ becoming today educated, administered, “reasonable”, cloaked in soft words: dialogue, pluralism, accompaniment, inclusion, process, mental health. Contemporary Arianism almost never dares to pronounce its true name; it prefers to camouflage itself. And its principal camouflage is this: it does not assert “Jesus is not God”; it asserts something more effective, because it anaesthetises: “That does not matter”.

That is the new dogma of the modern world: the divine may be beautiful, inspiring, poetic, but it is irrelevant to the real government of history. We are permitted to admire Jesus as a moral teacher, as a figure of compassion, as a symbol of the weak; we are permitted to be moved by his death, to quote him in humanitarian speeches, to hang him on walls and in museums; but we are forbidden, on pain of ridicule, to recognise him as what he is: the living God, omnipotent, judge of history, Lord of heaven and earth, master of death. As soon as he is recognised as such, the world trembles; because then it no longer rules. A Christ reduced to man is a Christ without a throne. A Christ without a throne is the dream of all powers.

The Church herself, in many sectors, has adopted that dream with cunning or cowardice. It has become common to hear sermons in which Jesus is spoken of without saying what burns most: that his resurrection is not metaphor, that his word is not suggestion, that his judgement is not literary figure. There is talk of “values”, of “community”, of “solidarity”, of “meaning”, of “hope”, and there is avoidance, as if it were shameful, of the language that founds Christianity: sin, devil, grace, conversion, obedience, punishment,

salvation, heaven, hell. They want a Christianity without wounds, without sword, without fire. But the Gospel is not only a message: it is above all a sword. And he who cannot bear that sword cannot bear Christ.

From theological Arianism to practical Arianism

The Arian heresy was not a technical error of ancient theologians, but the first great systematic attempt to dislodge God from the government of the world. Arius denied Christ for the same reasons that God—as Swedenborg reveals in his visions—would permit the rise of Islam in the warm lands of North Africa and the Middle East: infidelity in the full recognition of the divinity of the Lord. Swedenborg explains that “the Mohammedans of today are permitted to marry several wives because they do not recognise the Lord Jesus Christ as one with Jehovah the Father, and thus as the God of heaven and earth, and therefore cannot receive truly conjugal love” (§ 341). In exchange for validating those passions, so characteristic of warm regions—for, as he himself observes, polygamy is permitted “because they live in warm climates and therefore are more heated with lust than those who live in cold climates”—God delivered Islam to the Arabs as a providential concession to their inferior spiritual state. However, in the revelations that Swedenborg describes for the Mohammedans who ascend to the higher heaven, it is made clear that only those who renounce concubines, live with one wife, and recognise “our Lord as equal to God the Father, to whom dominion over heaven and earth has been given” (§ 342–344) attain full salvation; which implies that Jesus will come at the end of time as their voice to punish the hypocrite who has used his name—that of Allah—to kill and steal, and to impose the Kingdom of Heaven.

For the Arians, if God loved Mary only, and only once to beget his Son, God was monogamous. God would then be too close and uncomfortable for the polytheistic passions practised by the patriarchs of the Old Testament; a God who judges every new marriage would be intolerable; He would intervene in intimate life, which would be dangerous. That is why Arius proposed an intermediate Christ, admirable but tamed, elevated but impotent to

upset the order of the powerful; a human son, all too human, whom sceptics would in time reduce to the role of bastard: either as the fruit of an adultery of Mary with a Roman soldier—according to the ancient slander recorded by Celsus and repeated in later Jewish traditions—or as the son of a secret and political marriage, in the historical imagination of Robert Graves in *King Jesus*.

Arius was a conscious doctrinal fighter aware of the power contested in Alexandria and throughout the Empire. He mastered rhetoric, understood politics, and intuited that theology defines civilisations. Against him rose Nicholas of Myra, Eastern bishop, custodian of the poor and guardian of a faith that sprang from the central event of history: God made man. Between them a titanic struggle was unleashed, a collision of worldviews that traversed councils, cities, and consciences.

Arius proposed a rational, hierarchical, and administrable order: a single and distant God, a subordinate Son, a universe governed by stable and predictable principles. Nicholas affirmed a truth that transformed the world from its root: God had entered history, had assumed flesh, time, and pain, and that Incarnation disarticulated any project of power that sought to avail itself of the divine without submitting to Him.

The chronicles relate that, in the heat of the controversy, Nicholas rose with burning zeal before the reduction of the eternal Son to creature. His gesture earned him public humiliation, imprisonment, and the stripping of his episcopal insignia. Episcopal intrigues sanctioned the pastor who spoke with fire, while tolerating the theologian who endorsed the supremacy of human finitude.

In the silence of the night, Christ and his Mother appeared to Nicholas in dreams, restoring to him the Gospel and the omophorion, signs of the authority that proceeds from heaven. That vision sealed, in the ears of Helena, the mother of the emperor Constantine, what the assembly was debating: the divinity of the Son.

Always confident in his intuition, Constantine took part in the assembly and proclaimed that the Son shares the same substance as the Father. With his authority he ratified the conciliar verdict, separated Arius from communion, and sent him into exile. Thus, civil power served a spiritual decision, and the confession of Nicaea was sealed before history as the foundation of the government of God in the world.

But the spirit that moved Arius did not die with his exile: it slipped in through multiple heresies, such as those of the Cathars and the Lutherans, until reaching the 21st century.

Thus, the media of the present world, corroded by technologised superstition and fear, censor any poet who, as in my case, affirms the presence of Christ in his life.

When God is reduced to abstract principle, to indifferent energy or to impersonal law—as Arius wished and as today's deterministic psychology that denies freedom wishes—the human being seeks other ways to influence his destiny. Thus is born the obsession with astrology, numerology, witchcraft, “forces”, rituals. Not because man has ceased to believe, but because he believes badly.

Modern Arianism is no longer preached from pulpits, but in consulting rooms and universities: it is taught that man does not choose, but responds to stimuli; that evil is not sin, but trauma; that conversion is not rupture, but adjustment; that God, at best, is a symbolic consolation. That thought—which disguises itself as science—inevitably leads to a conclusion: if there is no Providence, there is technique; if there is no personal God, there is manipulation of destiny.

That is why it is not surprising that, once God is expelled from the centre, power seeks sorcerers.

Witchcraft and power: from Europe to Colombia

Aleister Crowley—the British mage turned into a cultural cult figure, today recycled by Hollywood and the pop industry—was, as we read, an isolated eccentric, but his life exposes the symptom of the spiritual evil of our era: that of power that wishes to dominate without rendering accounts to God. Crowley always expounded his project: to invert Christian morality, glorify the will, and substitute prayer with ritual. His thought has permeated the circles of the cultural and political elite of the 20th century.

In Latin America, that relationship between power and occultism has been described in books that caused scandal precisely because they touched the unnameable. In *La Bruja*, Germán Castro Caicedo gathers testimonies about esoteric practices linked to circles of power in Colombia, according to his sources, including allusions to black masses with family groups dancing naked in rituals, sessions

I, Petrus Romanus

and meetings of an occult character attributed to presidents such as Turbay and Samper.



The preference for superstition and bewitchment is of Arian root, and it was what led the Nazis to consult astrologers, empires to surround themselves with augurs, and contemporary democracies to disguise superstition as “strategic analysis”.

The media have normalised that language: political horoscopes, astral readings of power, seers turned into commentators. Thus, paradoxically, we have media that laugh at those who preach Christ, but kneel before astrologers. Why? Because the astrologer does not demand conversion, but does promise control, power, and magic without moral burden within everyone's reach.

The Astrologer: the confession of the defeated

In my short story “The Astrologer”, a public servant confesses to us that he preferred an instinctive universe to a living God.

The lack of interest in our schools in foreign languages has allowed me to acquire, at a modest price, a considerable number of books originally published in France, Italy, and Germany, in the antiquarian bookshops of England. That passion, like any other, is not exempt from responsibilities. At the beginning of the year 2000, I found a handwritten sheet in German among the worn pages of Karl Scheffler's *Gesammelte Essays* (Im Insel: Leipzig, 1912). Its meaning was denied to me for several years, until, during an

Hugo Noël Santander Ferreira

occasional trip to Saint Petersburg, I met a decrepit and toothless Russian doctor—to such a condition had the Cold War reduced its professionals—who survived selling trinkets in Pushkin Square. Upon learning of my interest in history, the old woman offered me a collection of documents in various languages which, according to her, had formed part of the KGB archives. What was my surprise to recognise, among them, the same handwriting as the manuscript discovered in York!

Below I publish my translation of both documents:

Manuscript discovered in the year 2000

Since my affiliation with the Party I have cultivated astrology; like so many compatriots I have denounced the Hebrew religion of my most recent ancestors to replace it with the autochthonous rites of my Indo-European great-grandfathers. Our conversion has been painfully effective; since the triumph of our Leader we have entrusted our fears and aspirations to a being of flesh and blood, far more concrete than that imprecise entity whom the vulgar call God. Like the emulators of Paracelsus and the disciples of Buddha, I conceive the universe as an instinctive organism, akin to beasts and trees. The motor of nature, as Schopenhauer glimpsed it, is not rational, but instinctive. Only the superior man—that is, the man master of an iron reason and will—shall be able to manipulate nature and his destiny. The will, as our Leader has well demonstrated, does not exclude either murder or lying. Any creed that professes compassion or affection reduces man to that passive state which our official philosopher calls slavery.

My art, as is well known, is based on the study of planetary movements. I am capable of seasoning a fortune, a love affair, or a global empire according to the vicissitudes of a natal chart. I have announced, on the basis of our studies, that the bold movements of our Leader will make our nation one of the most prosperous on the globe. I have suppressed, on the other hand, the verdict that in four years each of our Leader's assistants will face a series of terrorist attacks; the coordinates of our capital will then be situated at the point most antagonistic to Mars, Uranus, Pluto, and Saturn, heralds of destruction. My astrological and numerological knowledge compel me, according to my date of birth, to renounce my family, my power, and my fortune five days before the next Ides of May. My sacrifice

will ensure me a long life. Under the influence of the planet of war I shall land unscathed on a predetermined expanse by the Moon in Cancer; a slight tremor possesses me upon verifying that said expanse forms part of enemy territory; my audacity, nevertheless, will be rewarded with a tranquil life as a celebrated commander of the most powerful army on Earth.

I fear that my compatriots will curse me as soon as they learn of my movements. I myself have left a note to my Leader, in which I suggest that he brand me mad; my subordinates will opportunely testify that the man who governed them for several years had already been insane for some time. Coldly I verify that few among them will survive the nefarious influences of Mars and Bellona; those who do will, in the end, praise my wisdom.

When I recover my privileges I shall give account to my friends and enemies of the motives for my escape: patiently I shall demonstrate to them that only superior men are capable of handling the circumstances of destiny, cheating death, acting against the conventions of constitutions and gods. My revelations will necessarily be esoteric. The occult sciences have never been occult because of their supposed vagueness, but because of their privileged potential.

Only a circle of the chosen, the elite of the world, will have access to my writings. "My driver awaits me; it is time to bid farewell, concealing my agitation before my children and my wife."

Manuscript discovered in Saint Petersburg

I tremble upon verifying that every one of my predictions has been fulfilled; unscathed I descended upon the meadows of Scotland on 10 May 1941. Denounced by Adolf Hitler, judged and humiliated by my enemies, I have lived tranquilly, all too tranquilly, for forty-two years in this Berlin fortress, weaving the destiny of hundreds of English, Russian, French, and American soldiers. My country has likewise become the third most powerful nation on earth; its influence over the European Union, and through it over the world, exalts me.

And yet, I have endured an undeserved existence. Rashly I predicted my destiny through astrology, without realising that those who challenge the creative forces of the universe suffer the most nefarious consequences. As an influential member of the Nazi Party I condemned millions of half-breeds; at ninety-three years of age I

realise that, without knowing it, I granted each one a happy immortality; uselessly I yearn for it since 1941.

My struggle against suicide has been constant; while my party comrades ended their lives upon knowing themselves defeated, I have opted for a prolonged life, perhaps in the hope that my misfortunes will purge my offences.

For in that sleep of death what dreams may come

My errors have persuaded me that, as mortal beings, we shall never unravel the laws of chance and existence. A certain suprasensible will seems to orchestrate the movements of history, a certain passive will akin to that of the Jewish Messiah of whom I once renounced.

Night falls; from the bowels of this inhuman mass, I, Rudolph Hess, secretly recall my misdeeds.

Domine Deus, Rex caelestis, qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere me.

Spandau, 16 May 1987

Hess, like Arius, believed he could dominate the world without obeying God. And both ended the same: expelled, wandering, recalling in solitude what they denied in pride.

That Arius was wrong is demonstrated by subsequent history.

A world that denies the divinity of Christ ends up worshipping planets, numbers, energies, and rituals.

A world that ignores Mary as Mother of God replaces maternal love, the purest and most essential of life, with magic.

A world that does not believe in Providence ends up believing that any morality is valid.



***Psychological colonisation: behaviourism,
determinism, and clerical elites***

Behaviourism, in its classical version, refused to speak of soul, consciousness, spirit, inner freedom. It said: "I am not interested in internal states; I am interested in observable behaviour." By dint of repeating it, it turned the human being into a sophisticated animal: an organism conditioned by stimuli and reinforcements, by rewards and punishments, by habits and traumas. That may have limited value in specific contexts, such as the learning of skills or the modification of harmful behaviours. But when that lens becomes total philosophy, it produces an anti-Christian anthropology: man ceases to be a person responsible before God and becomes the product of impersonal forces.

That determinism—behaviourist or neuro-behaviourist, the name matters little—has been adopted by many clerics as a language of "closeness". What happens then? Everything is interpreted as conditioning. Sin is redefined as "learned pattern". Moral fall is redefined as "dysfunction". Repentance is redefined as "process of acceptance". Confession is redefined as "catharsis". The devil is redefined as "symbol of social evil". And divine judgement, of course, is erased: a God who judges would be "traumatic", "guilt-inducing", "toxic".

This infiltration is subtle, but devastating, because it modifies the believer's relationship with God. In the deterministic vision, the faithful no longer needs to surrender; he needs to "regulate himself". He no longer needs to obey; he needs to "manage himself". He no longer needs conversion; he needs "tools". The Church becomes a consulting room. The priest becomes an emergency therapist. The liturgy becomes a ritual of emotional containment. And the cross becomes a motivational metaphor.

But the cross cannot be reduced to a mere metaphor: it is sentence and resurrection.

When the clergy adopts that language, it believes it is being compassionate; in reality it is being complicit in Arianism. Because a Christ who only "accompanies processes" is a reduced Christ: he does not save, does not command, does not judge, does not conquer. Deterministic psychology, moreover, offers a perfect moral alibi for

powers: if everything is social structure, trauma, or context, no one is guilty. If no one is guilty, grace is unnecessary. And if grace is unnecessary, Christ is superfluous.

I have seen how that grammar has penetrated seminaries, homilies, documents, pastoral meetings. There is insistence on "not judging", on "not imposing", on "not discomforting". It is forgotten that the Gospel discomforts by nature: what saves does not lull to sleep. Human freedom—the foundation of conversion—is diluted. Man is described as the sum of factors. Heaven becomes an ideal. Hell, a taboo. And the devil, a folkloric myth.

Christianity, on the other hand, affirms the opposite: that the human being is not only influenceable; he is free. That he not only reacts; he chooses. That he not only learns; he converts. That he not only suffers traumas; he also sins. That he not only sins; he can also be forgiven. And that in that freedom the eternal destiny is decided.

It was the year 2013 when, in a dream, I saw Christ weeping in the midst of a dark path, traversing a desert covered by storm clouds. In the distance rose the Cathedral of Saint Peter, surrounded by smoking ruins. The Lord advanced bowed by the crown of thorns and by his cross. I ran to help him lift it and asked him what was the matter. Sobbing, he told me that the Pope no longer believed in God.

I raised my eyes and saw a man in a white tunic with red and purple stole abandon the scene, turning his back on us. I understood that he would no longer help Christ to bear his cross, and that it fell to me to succour Christ to carry it on my shoulders.

A few days later, on 11 February 2013, Joseph Ratzinger announced his renunciation of the papacy, effective 28 February 2013. Time confirmed the meaning of the dream.

Pope Francis I lacked living faith in divine omnipotence, as evidenced by his submissive attitude towards the international left. That attitude responded to fear of being pointed out for his relationship with the Argentine military dictatorship of the 1970s. When a man fears the media tribunal more than the tribunal of God, his word becomes diplomacy and prophecy becomes administration. His mission ceases to announce the eternal and passes to managing the temporal.

That climate of tepidity was also born from the spirit I described: a psychologised, deterministic Church, accustomed to being ashamed of the language that founds Christianity: sin, devil,

I, Petrus Romanus_____

grace, conversion, obedience, judgement, salvation, heaven, hell. There is preference for speaking of “climate crisis”, “migration crisis”, “economic crisis”, because those crises are administered with policies, budgets, and humanitarian speeches. The spiritual crisis demands conversion, and conversion sets comfort ablaze.

Those of us who love Christ suffer that scourge, and in 2023 the Lord asked me to impart condemnations. So far I have imparted three, with trembling and obedience.

The first two were written and published in my blog on 7 August 2023, one against the Pope who persecuted me, and another against Gustavo Petro, the ruler who had attempted to assassinate me, and who now, at the end of 2025, is the scourge of Colombia, public enemy of the USA for having auctioned his power and Colombian impunity to the highest bidder, that is, to organised crime.

My condemnation of the pontificate is due to its moral and political support for forces of violence and terror, blessing dictators such as Fidel, Maduro, and Ortega:

***The Black Pope, Francis I – The
Condemnations of Petrus Romanus***

In April 2012 I taught Hugo Noël My suffering for a Pope who no longer believed And I sent him to the United States to preach In the Abbey of Saint Vincent in Pittsburgh

On his way through Philadelphia he announced Having left the Americans unprotected On 11 September 2001 He was denounced to secret agencies

Pittsburgh To see if Hugo Noël would kneel Upon arriving he found only eleven monks

Among five hundred who should have been there And those eleven were dressed in black Only Hugo did I dress in white that day But the Nuncio, in his pride or prudence

Denied having seen a sign from heaven Ratzinger then decided to attack him First he hired him in Hyderabad Through Northwestern University

Ratzinger feared being discovered And consulted the astute Jesuit They decided to make a double papacy One conservative and one communist

...

_____Hugo Noël Santander Ferreira

Your principal crimes are written here And it is time to pronounce sentence. They will no longer see you in a wheelchair That in which you fell when attacking Hugo



Benedict XVI learned of it and sent The Papal Nuncio to Now they will see you bedridden Like a human vegetable The church will abandon you to your fate A new Synod will elect Petrus Romanus

God appointed me to sing truths to a world terrified of death. A prophet discomforts because he reminds of what many wish to forget.

That condemnation was fulfilled before the eyes of the world; Francis's agony was his penance, but his pride prevented him from recognising what is described here, and the college of bishops decided to eliminate him discreetly to prolong his papacy with a more diplomatic voice, that of Leo XIV.

The last verse remains yet to be fulfilled.

The parsimony of a Church paralysed by calculation allowed the metaphysical protagonism of physicists and journalists. They occupy today the symbolic place of the magisterium. The priest ceases to dictate the interpretation of the real; the expert dictates it. The expert decides what exists, what does not exist, what is “healthy” to believe, what becomes “dangerous” to believe. Thus faith becomes suspicion and scepticism virtue.

Journalists, scandals, and the idolatry of genius

Just this week the world is horrified to learn that Stephen Hawking, proponent of the already refuted Big Bang theory, participated in orgies where minors were abused on Epstein's island. Thus it is proven that the aura of genius does not purify the soul.

The world of the media, always allergic to anything alluding to spirituality, idolises brains as if they were saints; then it is scandalised when it discovers that those brains belong to sinners. And despite the undeniable dominion that good intentions have over the multitudes, the media prefer a god without morality: they want genius without conversion, intelligence without sanctity, power without judgement.

That is the same mechanism of modern superstition: man is exalted for his technical ability, turned into an oracle, treated as a prophet of matter. And when he falls, the public is indignant for a moment, only to seek another idol.

One day, for example, the Colombian magazine *Semana* published at least three articles about an astrologer who boasted of having cast the natal charts of the dolphins of power in Colombia, children of presidents, ministers, senators, etc. It matters little that ninety-nine of his hundred prognostications are not fulfilled; it suffices that one hits for the great mass to be inculcated that they must worship stones, that is, inert planets, rather than a single, omnipotent, and omniscient God, author and knower of all the destinies of the world.

Here is seen the alliance between press and superstition: the press needs spectacle; superstition needs credulity. The press avoids saints and prophets and elevates charlatans, diviners, and astrologers.

Despite my publications on almost all social networks, the dominant media irreverently ignore my revelations, and if they marvel

that so-and-so or such-and-such had prophesied that Trump would return to power, they do not do so when they know that I announced Francis's agony, as well as the 2020 pandemic.

I also endure the censorship and control exercised by the magnates of social networks. However, the accumulation of adverse events in their own lives, every time they attempt to silence me, has persuaded them to adopt, at least with me, a policy of laissez-faire. The same does not occur with their middle managers: tentacles of a left dominated by organised crime, who have sabotaged my message with greater fury, even though their superiors already suffer the consequences. Thus it happens today, visibly, in Cuba, Venezuela, and Colombia, all for attacking the prophet of the Lord.

If they had read the *Iliad*, they would understand that the first calamity falls when a god is affronted through his chosen one! Thus it occurred when Agamemnon outraged Chryses, priest of Apollo, and the god unleashed pestilence upon entire armies, decimating the Achaean camp until bending its leaders. A sacred offence is never contained: it spreads like plague, drags entire peoples, and turns an act of pride into collective ruin.

The market of fame: advertising as literary canon

The sad truth is that journalists charge from a thousand dollars for a press article; a “famous” writer, therefore, is not one who reveals certainties, but one who invests in marketing. That practice is an open secret among publishing houses, and the reader will understand the reasons why I have not submitted to such a dishonest strategy of dissemination.

On the other hand, and unlike so many other writers, I believe in an omnipotent God, and it will be when and how He deems convenient, not a day before nor after.

Psychological determinism prescribes that success is “strategy”, that fame is “construction”, that truth is “narrative”. And a narrative is bought, managed, positioned, optimised. But ethical truth, that which Socrates demonstrated as the only valuable one, is not optimised: it is announced, suffered, made magic through good actions.

That is why the world hates it, as Saint John prescribes in his letter.

Auguries, seers, and Faust's trap

Witches and palmists certainly possess spiritual gifts that evidence to a sceptical world the frivolity of matter and the transcendence of spirit, but to turn those gifts into instruments of dominion is an absurdity.

In my adolescence a gypsy read my palm and announced that I would conquer heaven and earth; at 26 years a young man with Down's syndrome augured that I would be the most famous Colombian in history; another seer told me that I would make films acclaimed by multitudes; already in previous pages I commented on my encounter with an angel who presented himself to me as an astrologer in India.

Those auguries led me, like Goethe's Faust, to study astrology and the divinatory sciences as well; thus I predicted to my ex-wife, for example, the exact date of our divorce. Ancestral wisdom? One hit among at least twenty that I formulated then. And the reason why astrology was in recent decades rejected as science at the University of the Sorbonne in Paris is precisely its low probability index.

But the world does not need science to believe; it needs consolation for its anxiety. Astrology offers cheap consolation: a map of chaos. A narrative that avoids the vertigo of freedom. Because freedom frightens: if I am free, I am responsible. If I am responsible, I shall be judged. Determinism, on the other hand, tranquillises: "you are not guilty; you are a product". That is the great Arian temptation of this century.

Intuition, spiritual world, and discernment

Swedenborg portrays in his books those astrologers, witches, and palmists as insignificant usurpers of God; the ultimate end of their "prophecies" is that their clients adore them and reward them generously for their "gifts". He comments having seen them in infernal circles surrounded by their retinue of five or six believers who adore them pathetically, without even realising that there is nothing left to divine in the beyond, a dimension in which all times coexist.

The diviner lives off fear of tomorrow. But when time dissolves—when everything coexists in the beyond—the diviner is left naked. That is why superstition needs to keep the world in continuous panic: crisis after crisis, threat after threat. Thus it sells and governs; it creates faithful without God.

The majority of seers with whom I have spoken assure me that their gift is possessed by any other human being; it suffices simply to trust in our intuitions, which are flashes that reach us from the spiritual world. The problem lies in that the spiritual world is composed of both angels and demons, of souls in pain inclined towards good or evil, or recent deceased souls yearning for heaven or hell. The visions a medium receives depend on his closeness to God or to worldly pleasures.

Modern psychology attempts to close this mystery: it speaks of cognitive biases, of pareidolia, of need for control. It may explain a part. But it cannot abolish spiritual reality. Christianity is not behaviourism: it does not reduce the invisible to the useful. And that is why Ignatian discernment is central: not every flash is light. Not every "sign" comes from heaven. And the devil, precisely, operates as luminous deception.

Just as there is no man or woman with propitious stars who can triumph if he has offended God, there is no man or woman, however contrary their stars may be, who does not obtain divine grace if he prays to God with a heart overflowing with good intentions. The history of Saint Paul proves it: one single fall, one single light, one single "why do you persecute me?", made of a murderer a saint, and the world changed.

Hence today the media alarm us since the 19th century saying that overpopulation will end the world, that there is scarcity in the soils, that we have no energy to mobilise, that we shall be conquered by aliens, and that we are nothing but an ephemeral result of evolution, result of a Big Bang, a theory already refuted as inconsistent by science itself.

The miracle is that the planet sustains today eight billion human beings, with resources for each one. There is hunger, certainly, but so many multitudes that subsist demonstrate that it is not as devastating as the media insist on preaching. It suffices to believe in God to entrust our daily existence to his will, the same that promised Noah

not to flood the world again, and that in Jesus manifested to his saints to prevent men from destroying the world.

Believing in God, as Alice Cooper said to the media, is the true rebellion today. Even art has lost the divine horizon and inclined towards the religion of the sword. Proof of this is that the majority of the most celebrated writers and film directors of our era are atheists, and that whoever is not is seen as prey to superstition and ignorance.

Art as indoctrination

Multimillionaire producers, avid to indoctrinate the mass public with an insatiable thirst for power, fame, or riches, subsidise botched scripts, with violent extravagances, that promote films seeking to reduce God to a series of coincidences. The pathetic thing, as we shall see, is that such films refute themselves.

Ridley Scott is, like Martin Scorsese and like many other directors of lesser fame, a great exponent of the worn-out cinema of the movement-image that the thinker Gilles Deleuze already unmasked and refuted in his cinema studies of the 1980s. In all his films, from *Alien* (1979) to *Exodus: Gods and Kings* (2014), a renewed adaptation of the second book of the Pentateuch, there is a hero—here an atheistic and intractable Moses—who, through circumstances beyond his will, has to take up arms and defend himself against someone or something that wishes to destroy him; the final confrontation between two forces is his greatest achievement, with the invariable result, according to the convention of the *Deus ex machina*, of the hero's triumph.

The best scenes in *Exodus: Gods and Kings* are those in which John Turturro acts as the Pharaoh of Egypt and Ben Kingsley as the Jew who must convince—not Schindler, but a Moses-Batman—that he is the leader the oppressed people of Israel have awaited for years. The rest is a weak remake of the great films of Cecil B. DeMille.

The cause of Scott's failure is his scant faith in what he does; the producers decided to finance a director who boasts publicly of being an atheist and who presents the ten plagues of Egypt as the consequence of crocodiles that devoured half a dozen fishermen. Scott makes Moses a timid man who does not even present himself

to the Pharaoh during those plagues, but takes advantage of them to send him a calf with a message written on its back.

The “wise” Egyptian who presents the plagues as natural causes is the spokesman for the scientific arguments that Scott prefers to explain those divine punishments, but his efforts to attribute everything to chance fail when that “wise man” is pathetically hanged by the Pharaoh. Christian Bale demonstrates to us that DC Comics heroes like Batman do not reach even the soles of biblical heroes, much less one of the greatest, Moses, who at 80 years dared to challenge the most powerful monarch on earth with no other argument than his faith.

Bale is not only an atheist, but also a fanatic of the atheist sect,



of those who tell children that Santa Claus or the divine Child God do not exist; in a revealing scene, his Bedouin lover begs him not to tell his son that God is an invention of the human mind. Shortly after, Bale is the victim of a landslide that leaves him covered in mud up to his nose; a clear attempt by Scott not only to ignore but to profane the first demand that God

made of Moses in *Exodus*: “Remove your sandals, for the ground you tread is holy”.

Bale revives the gestures and grunts of Batman in a fearful and irascible Moses who does not believe in God, not even after He

manifests himself to him no longer in a burning bush—which Scott leaves as a pretty scenographic ornament—but in a spoilt child obsessed with generals and wars. Scott's profanations against God do not stop there; Bale raises his voice to God in several scenes and shouts at him, treating him like a mere goblin among others. The very title already demonstrates his irreverence; it is not surprising, therefore, when the spoilt brat representing God does not tell Bale that He is who He is.

Scott carries his scepticism to such a point that Bale loses consciousness before that child, and when he awakens ill at home he conjectures that it was all a dream. But both the capricious and mean idea of God and that of a Batman/Moses crumble when they are forced to represent faithfully the text of Exodus. The change occurs when Moses finally presents himself before the Pharaoh to announce the last plague, that of the death of the firstborn.

The change is too abrupt to be credible; his Batman/Moses does not even have the power that God grants the biblical Moses to part the sea in two with his staff. Bale is a young soldier who arrives at the sea disoriented and, upon seeing the waters recede, “feels” that they must march into the seabed, an implausible decision according to the character arc that Scott has chosen to represent.

Once again, ignoring the Scriptures, Scott's Batman/Moses faints again at the end when he decides to “sacrifice himself” to save the Pharaoh by waiting for him as the seabed recovers its waters; his humanity, like that of his arch-enemy, is swept away by the sea. Miraculously and by chance, Christian Bale withstands the pressure of three hundred metres of salt water upon his head, and with him also appears “redeemed” the Pharaoh on the other shore, undoubtedly in the hope of a second part that we hope never occurs.

The recent failure of his Napoleon seems, according to Netflix publicity, to redeem itself with Exodus: Gods and Kings, but if the film has had high viewership it is not due to its excellences but to the poor offerings. The world is weary of stories of criminals and thieves, and yearns for spiritual stories like that of the Exodus. When will the world see a series of saints and prophets financed as generously as this mediocre film? It suffices to read William James's text *The Varieties of Religious Experience* to find its source of inspiration.

Exodus: Gods and Kings is an unimaginative film, full of commonplaces, with a disoriented protagonist, with atheistic ideas

refuted by the force of the biblical narrative that continues to inspire millions of Jewish, Christian, and Muslim believers.

The Third World War was fought in mid-March 2023

And it was Christ who decided to confront so fearful an end of humanity with me on 15, 16, and 17 March 2023; his descent into hell, which occurred two thousand years ago, I shared during those days of the 21st century, at the end of time, when the great powers of the world would unleash their nuclear weapons to exterminate two-thirds of humanity.

Luis Buñuel had also announced it in his film *Simon of the Desert*, when at the end Satan transports Simon the stylite from his solitary column in the desert of North Africa to the discotheques of Manhattan. The saint is torn from his silence to be tempted by noise, vertigo, distraction.

Besides subduing the violent destroyers of humanity, Christ exposed the hypocrisy of the world's leaders and permitted gods venerated by diverse cultures to announce through me messages to their communities, from the Pachamama of American aborigines to Shiva, the Child Jesus, and the Lucifer of satanic sects. The videos of those discourses were available on my networks, later eliminated by new policies of several of them.

The Vatican followed my words and actions those days: after I transmitted on Facebook Petrus Romanus's attack against the celibacy imposed on priests—“contrary to the Church I founded”—Pope Francis announced that he was considering withdrawing that vow. After the discourse of Lucifer, in which the Fallen Angel recognises having been defeated by Jesus Christ and being at his service, ready to punish those who commit murders and thefts in his name, “hackers” flooded social networks with images of the “Black Pope” Francis shaking hands with the leader of the satanic Church. The day I judged the Catholic Church I said that Pope Francis had a heavy task bearing pressures from traditional Catholics; the “Black Pope” was acclaimed almost immediately saying that he had much pressure and only hoped to enjoy a happy retirement with long holidays. The morning after I defeated the powers of the world, warning that whoever wished to employ nuclear weapons would

perish immediately, the “Black Pope” announced that the Third World War had been of a spiritual nature.

The war occurred just three months after the Vatican obliged me to transmigrate between the old and new world due to its implacable persecution. In January 2023 the Lord announced to me that I should flee no longer, for his hosts of angels would protect me; he also revealed to me that I—exiled from his church since the age of 17, when the Jesuits rejected my candidacy because of “my doubts”—even without being recognised, would remain as his true Pope, divulging his truth, if invisibly through my spies and persecutors, who often and without shame present my ideas as their own. Proof of this is the day when, giving his mass before his congregation in Indonesia, Francis divulged an idea that I had transmitted the previous day to one of my Latin students, a layman who informed him of my word: that religions were to God what languages were to communication, means to reach their true end.

The third world war was fought, then, during those days on a spiritual level; from my apartment in Bucaramanga I spoke with heavenly wisdom to France, Russia, China, Mexico, Europe, India, and Israel. What occurred those days is the subject of another book: *The Third World War*. It suffices to say that Jesus triumphed reconciling even hell itself, and that both France and Russia accepted his dominion over the future of humanity.

The attacks of the world's powers continued through santeros who invoked all my demons to attack me; foreseeing another attack I left my home one night to expose myself to my executioners according to their prejudices: dressed as a woman, to confront with no other protection than God an adolescent assassin who shot at me and missed three times.

Their attacks finally ceased on 17 August, when three earthquakes were felt throughout Colombia, just when my name was pronounced with destructive intentions in meetings between Colombian and foreign authorities in Bogotá. I published a video in which I explained the spiritual causes of those earthquakes, and how the Lord, in consideration of my love for my brethren, refrained from causing destruction in Colombia.

It was then that I asked God to contain the drought of El Niño, publishing on networks that the drought would not harm us, in days when President Petro was tweeting that the worst was yet to come.

Science fiction and apocryphal prophecies that will come to pass

There is a science fiction film that was seen by multitudes during the pandemic. It is *The 27th Day* (1957), by William Asher, a film in which aliens wishing to possess the earth deliver a lethal weapon to five citizens of diverse nations to use it to give life or death to their planet. The characteristic of the weapon is that, like COVID-19, it only kills human beings. In the end—spoiler alert—only perverse individuals and assassins perish, announcing a new era of peace.

“And an angel appeared with a sword of fire in his hand that seemed to set the world ablaze” is likewise the beginning of the third prophecy of Fatima, whose outcome is hopeful: “But the presence of the Most Holy Virgin prevented the flames from destroying humanity. The angel cried three times: ‘Penance!’”. Pope John Paul II interpreted this prophecy as something already past to calm his faithful, especially in light of the epilogue: “Then the children saw the unleashing of a great persecution of the Church, with representatives of the clergy and laity dying for the faith”. He alluded then to priests and nuns sacrificed in Africa and the Middle East.

On networks circulates another more descriptive prophecy that would shed light on the vision of Fatima. Though it concerns apocryphal descriptions, they spread due to the authority of one of the most recognised saints of the 20th century, who healed the sick like Jesus in Galilee according to the Gospels, and who suffered the blessing of the stigmata.

The apocryphal Padre Pio is said to have announced in 1950 three days of darkness during which Satan would be granted dominion over the earth, unleashing destructive demons:

“Prepare yourselves to live through three days of total darkness. These three days are very near... And during them you will remain as if dead, without food or drink. Then the light will return. But many will no longer see it.”

In accordance with passages from the Book of Revelation, two thirds of humanity would be destroyed: those consecrated to envy, hatred, resentment, corruption, murder, theft, falsehood, rape, intrigue and deceit. Those who worship Moloch or other idols would fall victim to angels who would descend, fumigating with gases those who dare to leave their homes. God, however, promises to protect those who remain in His grace, renouncing sin.



The eve of those three days would be marked by an event: the Holy Father would flee the Vatican to seek refuge in another nation.

The recommendations prescribed by the apocryphal Padre Pio called for penitence and prayer: to stock up on food and blessed candles for three months, to leave food for animals in their stalls, and to shut themselves in, barring windows and doors. The candles of those who are in a state of grace will not

go out; those of the unrepentant will be consumed. As in Sodom, no faithful person may look outside, even if they hear cries for help from those condemned by divine wrath. To summarise his oracles: hell will overflow into the world for 72 hours.

Overwhelming evidence confirms these prophecies, which I published in my journal during the time of the pandemic: the earth

was plunged into darkness for an indefinite period, which explains how past, present and future converged in the three days, and how those distant from God were consumed either by illness — disregarding pleas not to go out and spread contagion— or by their indolence. This is further shown by the fact that those far removed from mysticism and genuine religion —that which preaches forgiveness and kindness— were the most affected in their mental health. It was futile for those of us who remained at home to try to assist the crowds who ignored calls for quarantine, or those who threw themselves from the windows of their buildings, unable to bear the uncertainty of the three days of darkness, or those who later insisted that vaccines were part of a global conspiracy.

Yet the world prefers to ignore these interpretations. Some argue that the description attributed to the spurious Padre Pio, when read through the lens of science fiction, would correspond to an extra-terrestrial invasion: malevolent beings from other planets would ravage the earth for three days, until other beings —other angels— defeated them and rescued the planet. The survivors would then form a new world in which those despised by governments and societies, by virtue of their constant good intentions and their faith in the Gospels, would now rule in peace and prosperity. It would be the beginning of the Kingdom of Heaven on earth for generations.

The source of these prophecies is a book written about Padre Pio, *I grandi profeti*, by Renzo Baschera. However, during the canonisation process, 104 volumes of the saint's letters and writings were compiled, and in none of them was any manuscript found to support such predictions. The Capuchins of San Giovanni Rotondo likewise deny the veracity of these oracles, as sinister as they are hopeful.

No prophecy, in fact, is by its own nature irrevocable. Did not the Mayans prescribe the end of the world in 2012? The same end in which I intervened before God, moved by seeing me intercede for my enemies, besides my absence of rancour towards nations that had unjustly dismissed me from five universities, simply because I did not accept participating in corruptions or conspiracies.

The end of prophecies, from Tiresias, Isaiah, and the Sibyl of Cumae, is to make a call to attention to humanity through fear of death. Those who truly remain in grace know that the Kingdom of

Jesus is not of this world, and do not fear to die, as Saint Teresa of Jesus left recorded:

*I live without living in myself,
and so high a life I hope for
that I die because I do not die.*

Prophecies, in fact, are not destined for saints, but for sinners. They are a call to a change of life. But is that not already the end of the Eucharist, prayer, or any religious service? In each contact with his divinity the believer recognises excesses and asks forgiveness, for who lives exempt from wrath, pride, and egoism in a single day?

It is not only the will, but the circumstances of daily survival, that lead us to commit errors against others; faults that we secretly lament, but that our pride impels us to justify.

We know that Luther, who was also a composer, cemented the faith of his congregation through music, achieving greater manifestations in the music of Bach. Music is, as German idealists from Fichte and Schelling prescribed, pure feeling that bends reason; faith that



defeats theological argument and counterargument, sin or human weakness, turning it into an offering to the Creator.

Bach told his family that his music was his dialogue in solitude with God. Sin, like evil, finds redemption in the artist. Those of us who love music know that composers like Bach, Vivaldi, Handel, Allegri, Victoria, Mozart—to mention no contemporaries—received inspiration from the mystery of the imitation of Christ.

Allegri, in his Miserere mei, sings to God:

My God, according to thy great mercy. And by thy great compassion, blot out my transgressions. Wash me from my sin, cleanse my iniquity. For I acknowledge my rebellions, and my sin is ever before me. (...) Turn thy face from my sins, and blot out all my evils.

And with this I return to the beginning: Arianism not only denies Christ; it denies forgiveness. Because if Christ is not God, his blood does not save. If his blood does not save, sin does not matter. If sin does not matter, humanity surrenders without restraint to money, fame, and power.

Deterministic psychology then comes to put plasters on a mortal wound: it regulates, accompanies, explains, but does not save. And the Church, when it adopts that language as a substitute for the Gospel, betrays its mission.

Being a Christian under popes who no longer believe in God is not, therefore, a problem of personal sympathies nor of ecclesial parties. It is living in an era when even within the Church a useful, therapeutic, and socially acceptable Christ is preached, while avoiding the true Christ, the one who rises, commands, judges, and conquers.

That Christ—the only one—is the one I announce, and of which I myself, my history, these lines, are living testimony.

13. Miracles and angels impress a sceptical or unbelieving world only faintly

People often talk about the butterfly effect, but what happens when someone interrupts the course of history through prayer? What happens when a single plea—humble and silent—lifts the spirit of a sick person, shifts a vehicle by millimetres, or places the right person—visible or invisible—at the threshold of a catastrophe? The modern world, which prides itself on controlling causes and effects, readily accepts that a word spoken in a corporate meeting can change the fate of thousands; yet it bristles when someone suggests that a prayer, murmured under one's breath, can produce a consequence just as real. In that irritation something more essential than an intellectual debate comes to light: a miracle impresses us less by its rarity than by its moral demand.



A miracle raises one question about the existence of God, and another, sharper question about the human heart. For if the miracle occurred, then the door to gratitude opens; with gratitude comes an awareness of having received a gift; and with that awareness comes humility. Many would rather believe in chance than admit they have been given something. Thus the miracle becomes, for sceptics, an offence: because of its benefits and, above all, because of the consequences it entails.

I saw this clearly in the case of a student of mine who, years ago, told me his mother was suffering from terminal cancer. I told him I would pray for her. His mother recovered remarkably, and on the very day I returned to Bucaramanga from India, in December 2011, I ran into him. He told me that his mother's tests showed her body was now free of cancer. Far from thanking God, my student plunged into speculations about the coincidence of such a recovery. He was—and still is—an avowed atheist who delights in mocking the dogmas of Christianity.

“Are you going to thank God,” I asked him then, “or, like the nine lepers, will you forget who interceded for your mother's health?” He repeated my words and walked away. A year later I received a call from that mother—furious—blaming me for an incident her son had suffered in the street involving a motorcyclist. After insulting me, that woman, whom I knew only through that call, hung up. I saw clearly that her son had been beaten over money debts and that, influenced by a twisted thought, he had named me as his attacker. Sadly, by insulting me the woman renounced the blessings granted; the cancer returned suddenly and within weeks she died. Years later that student wrote to me from Germany, where he was living at the time, asking me to hear his confession, for he claimed to be repentant of his sins. Although my state is that of an anointed man and prophet, and my role is spiritual counsel, I agreed to listen. I already sensed what he would tell me; in the end, his visit remained indefinitely postponed.

A reader trained by media scepticism will say that one thing and the other belong to different planes. The point here, however, is to record honestly the pattern that repeats itself before my eyes.

There is a kind of ingratitude that goes beyond forgetfulness: it becomes an inner rupture. Whoever receives a good and reduces it to mere coincidence, in order to evade acknowledging the Giver,

resembles a person who, after suffering thirst, drinks from a spring and then walks away from the spring to claim that the water comes from the sky. Distance from the spring brings thirst again.

This spiritual law is as old as the written word: whoever acts with gratitude preserves the source of his blessings; whoever minimises a spiritual favour and then, tempted by the demon of vanity, even attacks the one who interceded for him or her, summons disasters.

This example is one of the most common scenarios for those of us who pray for miracles in this sceptical generation. Through my intercession as a prophet I have healed the sick and also halted droughts, diverted hurricanes, cancelled earthquakes and averted disasters in Greece, New York and Los Angeles; even so, gratitude rarely arrives, even among the few acquaintances who knew of my intercession and of the miracle that followed.

Indifference and gratitude appear to many as signs of mental sobriety, the media repeat. I also observe that the beneficiaries, spurred by feelings that exceed indifference, attack or ridicule the one who interceded for them. A moral logic lies behind it. The miracle heals the body, yet it also touches pride; and pride, when it feels exposed, seeks refuge in contempt. The healed person, before celebrating, judges; before giving thanks, discredits; before acknowledging, accuses.

They are moved by the negative energy that those of us who heal drive out through prayer. To pray for others, therefore, attracts contempt—and precisely in that burden its greatest merit resides. To intercede entails a spiritual cost: whoever does so exposes himself to ingratitude and, frequently, to enmity. The miracle restores strength to the sick person and at the same time demands an inner response. When that response is refused, the heart hardens.

The miracle is magic, and its formula is love

God, in his wisdom, sends illnesses and calamities as just punishments, trials or remedies. Everything in creation participates in meaning. And yet, in his infinite wisdom, he permits miracles through the intercession of those closest to him; in a world dominated by sceptical media, their fruit often proves paradoxical.

The media frame the miracle as superstition, parade it as spectacle, or interpret it as “cognitive bias”. They do so because the miracle resists the domestication of entertainment: it appears, it acts, and it asks for silence.

Did Mother Teresa of Calcutta not receive criticism when she celebrated, after her prayer, that an undernourished girl who died had been admitted to heaven? To the world, that joy seemed scandalous; to her, it was the natural consequence of faith.

Moreover, miracles are like the wind: invisible, refreshing, and easy to attribute to chance. Whoever receives a cool gust of wind rarely pauses to thank God; and still less does he recognise, as the priest told Samuel, that the Creator manifests himself in a gentle breeze. In modernity, the miracle is tolerated when presented as data, and it meets resistance when presented as a calling.

According to anthropologists, the miracle is a magical manifestation, humbler than shamanism and Santería (voodoo), now so fashionable in Africa and in Latin American countries such as Cuba and Venezuela. Whereas the shaman invokes animal spirits, and the Santero human spirits, the religious intercessor invokes the will of his God. The first two presume that God, or the forces that govern destiny, can be manipulated with fruit, blood, or the sacrifice of animals or babies; the religious person, by contrast, adopts a humble posture of loving prayer before God. The first two promise rain, fortune, powerful posts and revenge; the third abandons himself to the tender will of God.

In reality, all three face uncertainty, but only the third accepts, from the outset, whatever outcome God may decree. The shaman excuses himself by saying the animal he summoned rebelled; the voodoo sorcerer says the opposing spirits were too strong; the religious intercessor, in humility, explains that God judged another path more fitting. Of the three, the religious intercessor is the only one who remains at peace when the outcome is adverse: he accepts “the will of God” as the most appropriate, for in his wisdom that trial or pain ends up proving more beneficial than its cure.

The lady, the pandemic, and luck

In 2020, an elderly lady decided to travel for a few days to visit one of her daughters. She lived in the city, surrounded by her other eight

children, but this daughter lived far away, in the countryside, in a remote and quiet area. The trip was short, a visit of affection.

Then the world suddenly stopped. The pandemic was declared and the roads were closed. The lady found herself stranded far from her home city and remained in the countryside longer than planned. When the news spread among friends and relatives, everyone said the same thing:

“What bad luck for that lady! Stuck so far from home, far from her children, in the midst of so much uncertainty.”

Months passed, and the epidemic struck hard in the city where the lady lived. Of her eight children, four fell gravely ill and died. The news landed like a blunt blow. Then people changed their minds:

“How fortunate that lady was! If she had stayed in the city, she would very likely have died as well. Her bad luck saved her.”

When the pandemic finally began to ease, the lady prepared to return. Just then, in the countryside, she developed a terrible pain in her stomach—a strong, sudden illness that left her drained. Again came the comments:

“What bad luck! Falling ill out there, so far from hospitals. If she had been in the city, how easily she could have been treated.”

Some said it was a punishment from God.

But her daughter’s husband, a simple farmer, told her he had the gift of healing. He cared for her, attended to her, prayed for her and, against all expectations, the lady recovered. The pain vanished and she walked again.

“How fortunate!” some said. “To have someone like that close by.”

“That’s just how things are,” others said. “It was mild—pure coincidence.”

Recovered, the lady returned to the city and decided to undergo medical tests. The doctors were astonished. They told her that, by her symptoms, she had suffered an extremely severe appendicitis which, under normal conditions, would have been fatal. Yet the appendix was dry, healed, as though the body had healed itself.

The lady listened in silence. In her heart she felt she had received a great blessing from God, although at first both she and her community interpreted what had happened as a misfortune.

One need only think of Jesus Christ, who on the Mount of Olives asked God to spare him the crucifixion; or—by way of a modern testimony—of the Cistercian monks of Tibhirine, in Algeria,

who in 1996 refused to flee and accepted martyrdom as witnesses to love and to the will of God, as the film *Of Gods and Men* (2010) recounts. Here lies the crucial difference: the believer lives prayer as trust. For that reason, when the miracle delays—or takes the form of a different path—faith becomes deeper, more sober, more docile.

It is also true that miracles occur every day: from rising in health, eating, remaining calm, breathing and speaking, to seeing one’s beloved in good health, happy in their place in the universe, far from vice and corruption. This often escapes both the sceptic and the superficial devotee. The daily miracle is the hardest to recognise: it requires clear eyes.

As Muhammad states in the Qur’an, one must be generous while one still enjoys good health. Health itself is a loan, and time an even greater loan. Yet modern man, feeling himself the owner of his body and his schedule, turns the loan into a right. And when the loan is withdrawn, he accuses heaven.

Personally, I have experienced miracles since childhood. The first occurred when a *chulavita* (a state hitman in Colombia in the 1950s) threatened my father with killing my sister and me—four and five years old—after my father reported him for driving drunk at the Catastro (National Department of Property Registration) and he was dismissed. My grandmother Carmen, upon hearing it, said she would pray that God would take that condemned man from this world. And indeed, a week later the *chulavita* was gunned down by a criminal to whom he owed money from a bank robbery. That story is the subject of my autobiographical novel *From the Viaduct* (*Desde el Viaducto*) (Santaley, 2025).

Coincidence? For my grandmother, who prayed, it was providence; for many unbelievers, it was chance. That event shaped my stance towards miracles. Every Sunday I went to Mass, as thousands still do in Bucaramanga, and I found it irrational that we all listened to the Gospels while most remained in a lukewarm faith: Christ’s promises to come to whoever calls on him, to provide what is needed for survival to whoever trusts in him, to heal the possessed, to make the lame walk, and to restore sight to the blind.

In my life I have found all of this to be true. In my adolescence I read a Protestant book about miracles of the Holy Spirit made real among the Puerto Rican community of New York in the 1950s: *The Cross and the Switchblade*, by the Reverend David Wilkerson.

There the miracle is a form of mercy. It happens to awaken souls, to reorder destinies, to deliver hope.

As Mother Teresa of Calcutta teaches, I live with the certainty that prayer accomplishes everything. Shakespeare sang it wonderfully in one passage of his final play as a dramatist in London, before his departure from a city that honoured his talent so little:

*Unless I be relieved by prayer,
Which pierces so that it assaults
Mercy itself and frees all faults*

Which may be rendered:

*Unless prayer brings me relief,
for it pierces everything, and assails
mercy itself, cleansing every fault.*

Since my twenties, when I recovered my faith thanks to Bach's cantata BWV 147, I have made prayer my habit. Before I began to meditate, I used to pray the rosary every day; now I speak with God day and night. One day, when I was living in London, I decided to pray less. I was irritated because writing daily was difficult for me: I had to work part-time at Harrods packing children's clothes to pay my bills.

That night I dreamed of an angel showing me an entire city—New York—collapsing in an earthquake.

"If you stop praying, this is what will happen."

I woke sweating, with the living image that my friend Sascha would perish along with the New Yorkers, and I resumed my prayers.

Years later, around 2009, when I was living in Bucaramanga, one morning as I prepared my classes I felt an urgent need to pray for my sister and my nephews. It was almost eleven o'clock. I took the rosary and prayed for them. Hours later I learned that my sister, her husband and the children had had an accident at 11.05 a.m. on one of Florida's motorways. Their car was completely wrecked, yet the places where they had been sitting remained intact amid crushed metal; as a result, all of them emerged unhurt.

Months later my mother rang me one afternoon to say she had been praying for me that morning, because she had smelt blood

and heard breaking glass. I reassured her that I was well. Later I told her that around midday that day I had been saved miraculously from an accident after I ignored a STOP sign at 22nd Street and 21st in Bucaramanga. In my distraction I looked in the wrong direction before setting off, and a car braked hard, avoiding a fatal collision by millimetres. The sceptic will say: reflexes, chance, statistics. I say: mercy.

I have already mentioned elsewhere the miraculous recovery of my mother's heart through the Lord's intervention. There were others. When I returned from India, my mother was diagnosed with lupus. I performed a healing in the name of Jesus and she recovered; and the same occurred with several people in Canada, the USA, Mexico and Colombia. I applied healing to various acquaintances and friends, promising to pray from afar. Their healing has, miraculously, occurred in most cases.

As I have mentioned, I have noticed that among those who recover, a third leave the matter in silence; to them, the recovery and the prayer were coincidence. Another third give thanks to God from their personal experience, without offering recognition to those who prayed for them. As I recount in greater detail in another chapter, a Canadian woman who had suffered bodily pain for twenty years—against which doctors and the gurus of Montreal proved powerless—received relief when I prayed to God and laid hands on her; after thanking me, she summoned her neighbours and told them that she also prayed to God and that the healing was due chiefly to her accumulated prayers. Of course, I kept silent, for whoever prays knows the merit is never one's own. In the end, the healer, like the doctor, is an extension of the divine will.

But there is a third group of the healed who, drawing the most pernicious feelings towards themselves, omit recognising the intervention of prayer in their recovery and become personal enemies of those who mediated for their welfare. I have already cited the case of the woman with cancer, but I could cite a dozen acquaintances who, after surviving mortal illnesses or risky operations, turn their pen against belief or faith. A journalist named Viñedo, who was close to death from an inexplicable infection, is the most extreme case. I had seen him a couple of times, and already knew he was one of those characters who seek advantage from any gesture of courtesy. Viñedo asked on social media that people pray for him; several did; I joined

in with a message on his Facebook wall: “You are already healed.” The next day Viñedo healed miraculously and immediately took a photograph with a pastor, to whom he attributed the miracle. I kept silent: ingratitude forms part of the calling.

Later he had the chance to interview me about the launch of the book mentioned above. Viñedo agreed and, when I asked how much he would charge, he said I could pay whatever I wished. I gave him a sum I considered generous and he began working on a five-minute video. That night he asked for more money, saying he wanted to make a more elaborate video. I reminded him that we had already agreed the price. In response, Viñedo abandoned the work and left his part of the arrangement unresolved. I let him know that such behaviour was unworthy, and I withdrew my blessings.

That is the moral scandal of the miracle: it produces gratitude in some, and resentment in others.

“And why does God not speak to me?”

I had a friend to whom I recounted my conversation with Jesus in India.



“And why does Jesus not speak to me?” he asked reproachfully. “I want to ask him for a job that lets me stay at home, with autonomy, no bosses, and connected to music,” he insisted. He obtained a post as director of an online Latin-music station and, one day in the cathedral, Jesus spoke to him as he desired. One morning he rang me in India to tell me how happy he was about the experience. He even asked what he ought to do now, hinting that he would give me money.

In the end, those gifts of God fell on barren ground: six months later he told me he had obtained the job because the director of the station had discovered his Jewish ancestry through his surname, and he attributed his conversation with God, according to his current readings, to schizophrenia. Two years later we discussed philosophy on Twitter and, when I quoted Borges to refute Heidegger’s selfish philosophy, he told me he wished to cut all ties with me.

Encounters with angels

The angels, as I know them, resemble you or me, or the neighbours crossing the street. They are there—sometimes visible, sometimes invisible—and they come to our aid when those who trust in the Lord’s mercy need them most. I have heard many testimonies of people who suffer accidents or catastrophes and receive providential help from a man or a woman who rescues them. And in my own life I have seen the same pattern: an intervention that rarely claims recognition; a help that appears, fulfils its task and evaporates; a “Good Samaritan” whose later absence proves as mysterious as his arrival.

As I relate at the beginning of this book, the representative of Pope Francis mocked me when I affirmed that angels come to our aid in difficult situations. His mockery of angels has become common talk since Netflix released *The Two Popes* (2019). Yet a society can laugh at angels and at the same time live thanks to them. It can deny them and yet be rescued by the very forces it denies. Pride blocks gratitude; mercy continues to operate.

The mother of an old acquaintance was a victim of Escobar’s bombing at the shopping centre on Calle 93 in Bogotá. She recounted how a man arrived, lifted her as she lay dying among the rubble, and

delivered her to the ambulance that arrived just in time to save her. Who was he? How did he know what to do? Why did his figure become impossible to trace? In the logic of the world, he was “a citizen”; in the logic of heaven, he was a messenger. Both can be true.

When I lived in Paris in 2010 awaiting my Indian work visa, I spent afternoons in parks and cafés, reflecting on human evil, which forced me to wait for months. A Jewish man approached me, sat at my table with his computer and told me to be at peace, for my future was bright. He left me a card with his contact in Tel Aviv; a year later I wrote to him and his silence was the answer. Encounters like that happen once, and their purpose is to plant certainty at the precise moment it is needed.

In 2009 I suffered a minor traffic accident and a woman arrived immediately to help me. She lent me her phone, I made several calls, and after calming me she left; from then on her trace fell into silence. It was another angel, in the form of a woman, who arrived by car to offer me help after a traffic accident in Bogotá in 2009. Why such speed? Why such serenity? Whoever helps like that acts as one who knows the value of a single minute.

In January of this year, when my wife had to undergo a dangerous operation after losing our fourth baby, an ambulance took her from our home to FOSCAL, as recorded in my documentary *Matrimonio a Primera Vista* (2024). She was very nervous, but when we arrived at A&E a man came up, took her hands and said in a calm voice: “Don’t worry. Everything will be fine.” His assurance was such that she calmed down and fell into a deep sleep. I was there and I perceived that voice as coming from another region of being. The area was, in fact, tightly restricted to third parties. What remains is the effect: peace. And peace, on such thresholds, is a gift.

Angels and what the world calls UFOs

In 2015, during rehearsals for *El Botín*, when I was being attacked repeatedly in Bogotá by the commands of the then mayor, Gustavo Petro, lights resembling UFOs hovered over my flat and followed me through the city. It bears mentioning that those of us who have studied the drawings of the Argentine seer Parravicini understand that angels are the same as extra-terrestrials, in harmony with the Book of Genesis (28:12). I have already mentioned

Parravicini’s prophecies, including his words about a dead child in whom people would recognise Jesus Christ after 2022. The teacher Camilo Hernández remained sceptical until I showed him and Diana Barragán the UFOs in the sky. He cried out, shifted restlessly, and concluded—unable to accept unknown forces in the heavens—that they must be secret military objects.

Angels often appear in the form of those who have departed. In my documentary *Manatí: Altarpieces of an Underdeveloped and Happy Town* (2005), an agronomist recounts how a priest had an otherworldly encounter before dying. My great-uncle, Jaime Santander SJ—“the only honest Jesuit we have ever known”, in the words of one of his pupils—spoke for several hours with a labourer who guided him along intricate paths until pointing out a house where he could spend the night. “That man has been dead for more than twenty years, Father!” they told him at the house when he mentioned his guide.

Swedenborg relates that angels, like demons, are in truth the perfect marriage between a man and a woman. Intuition (feminine) and intelligence (masculine) combined create angels who, in future lives, serve the just in this world. Swedenborg likewise explains the existence of demons: entities that continually tempt men and women, inviting them to self-destruction. The world mocks demons and angels, and at the same time speaks endlessly of “energies”, “vibrations”, “transgenerational traumas” and “inner shadows”. Names change; realities remain.

A friend of mine was furious with his son for getting him into debt; he vowed to break off the relationship. Then his mother came to him in a dream, reminding him of the faults she had endured from him, emphasising that the family is the theatre of forgiveness. This kind of visitation brings moral teaching and a strange peace. It corrects hatred. It heals a wound. And everything that heals participates in the divine.

I am struck by how attached so many people are to this life of appearances and simulacra. Death is a journey from one place to another, and the soul learns to walk lightly when it remembers its destination.

Leyla and I felt no mourning at all over the loss of our four babies. “We are eternal,” I persuaded her, “and we have much to celebrate.” We know that Jesus and the angels care for them until our

arrival. To the world, this is incomprehensible; to the believer, it is rest.

Two years ago my little dog Cleopatra growled at another dog belonging to an aggressive man who was on the verge of attacking me. A man wearing sports clothing from the 1970s stepped in to calm things down, saying it was normal for animals to growl at one another. When I turned to thank him, he had vanished.



In November 2021, a Christian congregation in Bucaramanga laid a trap for me. A motorbike struck my car with the intention of suing me, with the complicity of a traffic officer. Before the incident, I stopped to pray before the statue of Saint Anthony of Padua and the Child Jesus, as I used to do in a congregation in Porto in 1999. The motorbike tried to overtake me on the right just as I was making a turn. I braked, but the motorcyclist struck his leg against my bumper. I applied the gift of healing to the

injured rider, who suffered only slight harm. His motorbike remained intact, without dents or scratches.

Soon his colleagues arrived, members of a sect. They tried to persuade the traffic officer that I was at fault. The officer intimidated me, suggesting that I declare myself guilty, even if the accident had been caused by the motorcyclist. Then a man who identified himself as the mandarin seller from the corner intervened, contradicted the

officer and blamed the rider. He also conjectured that the rider was drunk. That kindly man gave me his mobile number and helped me change a tyre on my car that had been damaged by the impact.

The rider's relatives delayed the breathalyser test for seven hours by means of tricks, with the complicity of the clinic, until I announced that I would call the authorities. The result confirmed the mandarin seller's judgement: the rider was drunk.

The next day the mandarin seller's number had disappeared from our phones. I passed by that corner again, and the corner stood empty: the image of the Good Samaritan had dissolved. We looked for him in the street, and his trace lay beyond our reach.

Invisible angels

Those of us who entrust ourselves to the protection of heaven also count on what I call—lacking a better name—invisible angels. In any transport terminal in India, every bus receives its *puja*, prayer or purification ritual. The particular god or religion invoked matters little. In that gesture of humility before the unknown and the invisible lies spiritual greatness: to recognise that every journey depends also on grace.

It was 2006 and I was travelling with my parents, in an old Nissan saloon, back to Bucaramanga from San Gil. We admired the abyss of the Chicamocha Canyon and stopped at a shop on the edge of a precipice, where we bought a soft drink. We returned to the car, yet it would not start. We examined it and discovered that the brake-fluid pump had broken. Soon afterwards the car started as usual. That moment of delay preserved us.

These are some of the many and varied experiences of deliverance I describe in my stories and novels. One can, of course, attribute them to happy coincidences. Yet it suffices for me to contemplate the crowds in the streets to realise that the greatest miracle is that we remain safe for one more day. All of us receive invisible warnings—sudden intuitions that arrive like a spark of light. And many times they come from the prayers of others.

How does one work miracles, and how does one summon angels?

In response to that question, I offer the reader the poem I wrote in a birthday card for my nephew Jack, from whom the forces

that dominate the world distanced me. My “fault” was that, by the grace of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, I healed him of autism when he was only three years old. His doctors, in the end, attributed his improvement to chemical compensations in his brain:



14. Criminals Suffer Punishment When They Attack the Righteous

When I search for ancient episodes that reflect the protection I have seen and lived through time and again, I return to Greece. After the dismemberment of Alexander the Great’s empire, the country fell into internecine wars: quarrels between brothers, contests of ambition, factional struggles. That sort of rupture opens a door in History: as soon as a nation divides, a predator appears, sniffing out the spoils.

Thus came the Gauls, under the command of King Brennus. They ravaged fields and plundered cities around 278 BC, advancing with the typical certainty of the raider: the certainty of one who believes the world can be reduced to force, fear, and opportunity. And when they finally reached the greatest prize, they arrived at the place where all Greece had concentrated its reverence: the sacred city of Delphi.

Delphi safeguarded the reliquaries of gold and silver that all the polis sent to their gods as offerings of sacrifice or thanksgiving: sometimes for good fortune, sometimes in repentance. Delphi was more than a city; it was a spiritual covenant. There, precious metal functioned as collective memory: each object deposited said that, even amid wars, peoples preserve a threshold, a limit, a place that is honoured.

Robert Graves remarks that Delphi used to be the altar of the White Goddess during the Bronze Age, hundreds of years before Zeus and his brothers imposed themselves as the new male gods. That observation—whether accepted or debated—helps one grasp the weight of the sanctuary: Delphi had passed through eras, names, and liturgies, while retaining its condition as a centre where humanity trembles before the invisible.

The city had never been sacked. Even the Persians—like the Hindus of today—respected that sanctuary as sacred and untouchable. The ancients understood that it is one thing to sack a city and another to profane the precinct that sustains the moral

meaning of a civilisation. Whoever crosses that threshold touches something that transcends human calculation.

The historians of our positivist generations look on ancient chronicles with mistrust, as though the past were a superstitious rumour. And yet the chronicles insist: an earthquake was unleashed, crushing Brennus and his Gauls beneath mountains of stones. Those violent barbarians were destroyed by the gods, a portent that secured Greece's freedom for another hundred years.

From that episode I draw a stinging question: if the divinities guard offerings locked inside marble temples, what breadth of guardianship do they exercise around a righteous person, whose spirit becomes—according to Saint Teresa of Ávila—a temple of the Creator Himself? If a sanctuary receives protection because of the gold it holds, a human being receives protection because of the good he bears. Whoever attacks goodness touches the living temple. And the living temple responds, by paths that modern reason calls coincidence, and faith recognises as justice.

A Journey Through Seven Nations and One Pattern of Guardianship

At times people ask me, with curiosity and with that mixture of mockery and astonishment the world reserves for the spiritual:

—How is it possible that you have travelled the whole world denouncing injustices and returned to Colombia unscathed?

I answer from experience: I give thanks to the Lord and recall the dangers I have faced from one nation to another. Evil abounds; envy lies in wait; the foreigner who arrives with privileges—languages, education, vocation, inner freedom—awakens fangs. There are people who live with a single mission: to prove that goodness is naivety, and that the righteous deserve to be corrected with blows.

In Madras, India, a seer who claimed to express the will of the Virgin Mary told me a phrase that gave words to what I already felt. That medium lacked recognition from the Roman congregation, and yet dozens of believers came to her trances. I saw in her a mixture of fervour and truth: the sort of human instrument heaven uses independently of official seals.

—They will not harm even your shadow.

And then, in Tamil, she added:

—All your projects will be made to come true.

Providence reveals itself sometimes through immediate intuition, sometimes through phrases delivered by those we meet. I call this, precisely, the power of Goodness, and it occurs—again I repeat it—in varied forms, such as:

The intuition that triggers alarm and enables you to choose the right gesture just before harm.

The providential delay, which looks like a setback and proves to be a rescue.

The door that opens (a job, a scholarship, an encounter) when life seems to be closing.

The human barrier (a witness, a porter, a driver) that halts the aggressor.

The coincidence in time, that synchrony that saves you by millimetres.

The cancellation, when heaven dismantles a trap through an external event.

The moral reversal, by which the persecutor receives a sign that humiliates him.

The word, which tangles and twists itself against our will to express wisdom before a rival, or which articulates in the wicked confessions it makes against its will.

I have seen these gifts and many others manifest for my protection in every nation I have lived in: Colombia, the United States, Portugal, England, France, Kyrgyzstan, India, and Mexico. Each one is the subject of a novel, but in that book, I will cite a brief and representative episode from some of my travels.

When You Are Good-Hearted, Heaven Protects You

In Colombia one of the clearest episodes of my young adulthood occurred: an attempt to erase me through a bar-room deception.

In December I returned to Bucaramanga, coming back from a holiday I had while working in India. I used to go to karaoke with a former student. That time he cancelled our meeting at the last minute, and my heart—able to recognise the pattern before the eye sees it—

felt something odd. Even so, I went. I sang alone. A couple applauded me. They invited me to a drink and, as part of that choreography of false safety, the man showed me an ID and told me his surname, as though handing over a credential of “respect”.

—Ferreira.

I looked at the document. In my heart the alarm was already vibrating: one senses the real intention. And yet, at that time, I still had a hope: I believed that certain people could be given space, that they could be converted. I thought that goodness, offered calmly, disarms the predator. I once confessed that hope to an ex-brother-in-law in the United States and he laughed at me, convinced I was naïve. Over the years I came to understand his laughter as a partial reading: yes, the world operates through aggression and stubbornness; that stubbornness they call “maturity”. And my way of forgiving is incomprehensible to them.

I accepted the drink. They gave me a substance which I assume was scopolamine. The next day they analysed my blood and found no traces—a providential cleansing. But that night the plan continued on its course.

They shut the place and took me to a sinister bar at the entrance to the old road that leads to the Mutis neighbourhood. I remember the journey and I remember my own voice, still full of an almost luminous confidence—a confidence that, in those days, made me walk through thresholds I now avoid with greater discipline.

—I’m going with you without fear — I told them — God protects me.



They laughed and repeated my words as mockery, as an inverted spell:

—God protects me... God protects me...

The bar was one of those Colombian *buecos* where the aesthetics betray the economy of crime: enough light to see, enough shadow to watch; ordinary music to camouflage what is not ordinary; cheap tables; poor ventilation; an atmosphere of surveillance in which the eye learns to measure who comes in, who goes out, who looks too long. There was a woman at the entrance with the look of a madam, a pimp, a procuress: the kind of woman who manages the threshold as if charging a toll to the night. Her face was the face of habit—the habit of watching people fall.

We sat at a table at the back. The two of them went into the ladies’ toilet. Half-stunned, I went to the men’s toilet next door. And there the exact moment occurred when Providence set my intuition ringing like a siren: I heard them speak clearly, over the background music, as though my hearing were “bionic”.

—We need to give him more — said the woman.

—No, because he’ll die! — replied the criminal.

—But we’ve already given him two portions and he’s still calm!

In that second I saw the real intention with clarity: they wanted to exceed the dose, switch me off, take me somewhere where the robbery would be completed with disappearance. I understood that my hope of “giving space” to predators was a dangerous naïveté. Aggressive people fix on a purpose with obstinate foolishness. They do not come to talk: they come to carry out.

My inner dialogue was brief and absolute: leave now. The question “what was the point of delaying?” became an order. I left the toilet, headed for the bar’s door and, without giving the owner time to react, I ran uphill without stopping until I reached Carrera 17. I took a taxi. I was sweating profusely. We reached the flat, I paid, got out, and lay down just before passing out.

I woke the next day at around three in the afternoon.

In my haste I had left my Nokia mobile in the taxi. I regretted it because I had taken many photos and videos, among them images of the thugs. In my meditations I saw clearly what I had already sensed: those scoundrels had been sent by “friends”. Life has taught me that there are obliging friendships that also embody the role of consumed envy. How many pretend friendship only in order to destroy us?

*I, Petrus Romanus*_____

Years later, remembering that experience, I sweated and felt nerves for the first time since it happened. And I heard:

—You must write about it.

Such experiences are lived and then kept silent because the modern listener, trained by media scepticism, attributes the miracle to coincidence and reduces guardianship to statistics. I, on the other hand, record the pattern that summarises the whole content of this book and of my work:

**WHEN YOU ARE GOOD-HEARTED, HEAVEN
PROTECTS YOU**

***Colombia: The Confused Gang and the Boy
with the Tiple***

In Colombia there was also a childhood episode that taught me the moral fragility of gangs and the concrete power of recognising goodness.

I must have been about twelve. I had come from a prolonged retreat of reading—I have always read for long periods—and I joined the escapades of the gang from my street in Diamante II. I learnt they were at war with the corner to the north. In front of the congregation of the Divine Child they traded insults; a mate threw a stone that hit one of the rivals on the leg. Then they charged shouting and we ran back towards Transversal 22.

On the way, by an impulse I now read as confused intuition, I threw myself behind the neighbour's planter at the corner. Someone saw me. In seconds, twenty teenagers were ready to lynch me. I felt the weight of collective violence: that crowd that turns animal.

Then a boy recognised me. He was a mate from the Christmas music group to which I also belonged. He must have been thirteen or fourteen. And he said what saves:

—Wait!

And he added, with authority:

—I know him: he's a good lad; he plays the tiple and sings carols.

The mob ran off and left me in peace.

That episode taught me quickly something decisive: "running with gangs", adopting aggression, "showing more face" than others—those were paths I could abandon early. By seventeen I

_____ *Hugo Noël Santander Ferreira*

understood that that sort of comradeship is often false. I preferred solitude in God to the fraternity of resentment. It is the same disillusionment Christ perceives when they seek him after the loaves: they seek him for free bread, not for truth.

***Portugal: Porto, the Ilhas, and the Miracle of
Calm***

In Portugal I experienced a miracle of another kind: passing through danger without danger touching me. It was 1999. I was teaching in Portugal at the time. One night, wandering through philosophical conversations, I found myself with the Norwegian animation producer Frank Mosvold—creator of *Ella Bella Bingo*—in the centre of Porto. We ought to have returned to our flats on the other side of the city, but Frank decided that a full-moon night deserved to be explored on foot. My ex-wife Michelle and I followed him.

We walked for nearly two hours through the narrow passageways that divide the *ilhas*, clusters of houses with shared bathrooms, along the slopes by the Douro, notorious for being nests of criminality. It was the sort of walk that, when told the next day, provokes disbelief. And precisely there lay the portent: upon waking, calm remained intact; our bodies were intact; the crossing of the urban abyss had become a guarded passage. Sometimes the miracle consists in what the world expects to happen—and yet dissolves like smoke.

But what was truly miraculous in Portugal was not limited to that nocturnal walk. At the time, I was to make a documentary entitled *Ilhas do Porto, the Outskirts of Porto*. This project was made possible by a grant I had won from the Portuguese National Institute of Cinematography. However, the intermediary producers who had introduced me to the grant, once they learned I had won it, attempted to strip me of the right to direct the film: they offered me money on the condition that they would direct it themselves.

I refused. I told them that directing this documentary belonged to my professional vocation and trajectory. They responded with cunning, delaying the process until the year 2000 began. Their strategy was to exhaust me, make me fail, and then seize the project.

Then another portent occurred. That same year, 2000, my first wife Michelle—once again thanks to a penance I had undertaken at the shrine of Our Lady of Fátima and a prolonged fast of one week—finally secured a position after two years of waiting. That post could have been anywhere in the world. I prayed fervently to the Virgin of Fátima and persuaded Michelle to pray with me too, though she was an atheist. The signs she had witnessed led her to convert—if not to clericalism, then certainly to Christian belief.

I asked that the post be in England: I wished to know the country of Shakespeare, Dickens, Blake, Oscar Wilde, Bernard Shaw—so many writers who had formed me. And, miraculously, while some trainees of the programme were sent to Africa and others to Oceania, Michelle was placed in Manchester, England. It was a clear miracle.

From then on, a new chain of prodigies unfolded. Since I now had to travel to England, I managed—once again against expectations—to have my university in Porto allow me to condense my teaching into one week every two months. I no longer needed to live permanently in



Portugal: I resided in England and returned for one intensive teaching week. The university covered my travel expenses and accommodated me in a modest but clean hotel.

This arrangement had been devised by my adversaries to harass me: they hoped I would fail to organise the filming properly and that they could then appropriate the documentary. Above all, they relied on a factor they believed infallible: rain. Porto is one of the rainiest cities in the world. They were certain that the weekends of filming would be ruined by bad weather.

I told them simply:

— I will ask God that it does not rain on those days.

They mocked me and called me a believer. I had already told them about my experience at Fátima, the Virgin who wept and urged me to read the *Acts of the Apostles*. In the end, they agreed—almost as a challenge.

And it did not rain.

We filmed over eight weekends. For seven of them, the sun shone. On the eighth—the final one—the day we were to film the closing episode, a communal gathering and shared meal showing the fraternity of the *ilhas*, a torrential downpour fell. Yet those images proved invaluable: they showed that life there is not a paradise, that rain falls, that sadness exists. The documentary gained truth.

The film was presented successfully, and I remained credited as its director despite all obstacles. A clear victory granted by God.

Harrods: the Door of Work and the Discipline of the Writer

In England, protection took the form of a door. I wanted to write, but life demanded work. No one offered me employment easily: I came from academia. For months, all doors remained closed.

I then went to the United States, hoping to find an opportunity. But without work papers, despite my French citizenship, I was offered only illegal jobs, particularly in construction. I accepted one out of necessity. Very soon, I realised that this environment operated by very low ethical standards: people entered building sites to steal whatever they could. I refused to participate. Tensions arose immediately. One evening, instead of taking me home, they

abandoned me by the roadside, in an area without transport. I waited nearly six hours until relatives came to fetch me at night.

Then I prayed to Jesus:

—Lord, I am here and I need your help.

The following day, another miracle occurred. My mother arrived in Orlando. She had had a dream in which I told her I needed help. Seeing my situation, she decided to support me so that I could return to be with my wife and seek work with dignity.

I returned to England. And there, precisely at Christmas, Harrods appeared. They urgently needed staff and offered me a position. My organisational performance was so effective that they soon offered me full-time work. I agreed to work three days a week and kept four to read and write. That balance was a form of guardianship: heaven tested me without tearing me away from my vocation.

For Providence honours discipline, but even more so goodness; have faith in a universe that favours those with a good heart.

The Miracle of the Scholarship and the Car in Philadelphia

From the United States I mention two representative portents.

The first was the financial miracle that saved my studies. My parents, with great effort, paid for about a year and a half. Then my father told me he could not go on and that I would have to find a way. I reached the point of collapse. I cried in front of my girlfriend.



I considered marrying as a way out; she, sensibly, said no. I understood her. I saw myself on the verge of returning. Then I said, with my heart surrendered:

—Lord, help me.

And an exact opportunity appeared, even at a time when my English was still maturing and communicating was difficult. An Indian classmate told me he would travel to India and that his boss needed someone to cover in his office answering calls. If I accepted, they would grant me the scholarship; and they would pay me for the hours as well. The task was minimal: two calls in the morning, two in the afternoon. For me it was perfect: I devoted myself to reading and, above all, to writing, working then on a screenplay about the sixteenth century in Spain. That summer of apparent quiet became a creative engine. That episode enabled me to graduate. That was a miracle, without rhetoric.

The second episode happened in Philadelphia, in winter. I had little experience with snow and ice. I drove down a street and the car lost control; it slid on the ice and crossed an intersection. In that exact instant, traffic “fell silent” and no car appeared to smash into me. The world calls that good luck; the noble person recognises it as heavenly protection: the precise second that empties itself to prolong your life.

Kyrgyzstan: Spinning on Ice and Inner Certainty

In Kyrgyzstan, protection manifested as an inner certainty in the midst of the most physically dangerous scene.

We had travelled south to give a lecture in the middle of winter. My wife and I were travelling in an old Lada sedan, with the Kyrgyz driver and myself in the front seats. We had been sent along treacherous roads, and I sensed a certain malice on the part of our superiors in assigning us such a risky route: pure ice, a precipice on one side, and on the other a ditch and a mountain wall.

Suddenly, the car lost all control and began spinning like a top along the icy track. My ex-wife screamed. The driver wrestled with the steering wheel. And within me, something entirely different took place: an intense, overwhelming peace. I laughed aloud, for I felt the Spirit of God and received a complete, lucid certainty that we would come to no harm.

The car spun again and again, yet miraculously remained on the road. At last it jolted to a halt, facing the wrong direction, before the driver carefully guided us back onto our course. We continued the journey, slowly.

To steady the moment, I addressed the driver in Russian:

“Thanks to your skill, we were saved.”

Then I turned to my ex-wife, who was still trembling with fear, and told her that the guardianship I possessed surpassed any driver’s skill. She heard me, yet was unable to believe — a reaction I have witnessed in so many people throughout my life. The signs of God stand plainly before their eyes, but such is our education that most are unable to see them.

India: Agra, the Key Without an Address, and the Miracle of Photographs

In India, Providence used a trivial gesture as a rescue rope: taking photographs out of enthusiasm.

In September 2013 I travelled to New Delhi, Jaipur, and Agra. I arrived in Agra by train, in the low season, and I had not booked a hotel. A taxi driver took me to a comfortable hotel. They registered me, handed me the key, and the manager urged me to go out quickly to enjoy the unforgettable Taj Mahal. Carried by enthusiasm, I took photos from the moment I left the hotel. The visit was incredible:



beautiful tourists gave life to that tomb that shines like a palace of Paradise.

At dusk I looked for the hotel’s address on the key. I found only a photo of the Taj Mahal on the key fob. I understood the scam: refusing the tourist a card, a copy of the registration, any minimal reference, so that he gets lost and the hotel keeps his luggage. I felt a chill. I asked heaven for help. Then I remembered my photos: I had captured the street as I left.

I took a taxi. He drove me to a taxi stand. I showed my photos to fifteen drivers. One recognised the street. When I entered the hotel, the manager turned pale and almost collapsed with fright: his scam had failed. In that pallor I saw the predator’s face when the righteous return.

Mexico: Crime & Impunity, the Library, and Providential Cancellation

In Mexico I lived a protection that operated as delay, as cancellation, and as moral reversal.

My play *Crimen e impunidad* (*Crime & Impunity*) touched a local nerve without my seeking it. The play was based, lightly, on the Colmenares case in Colombia. As it moved through the Mexican environment, certain powers read it as a mirror of a case that had happened there: the son of a gigantic bottling company had killed an innocent person, protected by networks so strong that—so it was said—the President of Mexico himself had ordered his release. That young man, moreover, gave his name to the library of the university where I worked. That detail explained the concrete power of the enemy: a name turned into an academic monument.

For that reason the university ended my contract. I planned to return home, and I asked for a few more days because my parents were visiting me on holiday. They were right to fear: real power is not limited to courts; it has long arms, messengers, vendettas.

At the airport the first sign appeared. My mother needed a wheelchair. They provided it late. The logistics dragged on. We missed the flight. They tried to charge us again for the tickets. I saw the attempt to squeeze us as punishment from that accused man, a fine by way of warning. Then I acted firmly: I said I would report everything, because I had recorded sequences and because I was a

journalist and had a website at the time, hugosantander.com, whose history can now be seen on The Internet Archive. They checked. They saw I was not bluffing. They reissued the tickets.

The story continued with another mechanism: cancellation. Back in Bucaramanga, a strange invitation appeared: a “flash festival” in Mexico City for ten Colombian theatre groups. They offered budget, invitations, urgency. An actor friend—Cabeto, Carlos Pinzón—smelt danger: those festivals are organised well in advance. “Flash”

sounded like a trap.

He told me:

— That’s very odd. I see something suspicious there.

And I replied from my spiritual logic:

—If there’s a trap, God will protect us so that we don’t go.

Soon afterwards the country was shaken: students’ bodies were discovered, scandals that rattled Peña Nieto’s government and opened a deep political shift. The festival was cancelled. We were left safe. I felt a presentiment of further attempts; then a severe earthquake came. And that pressure dispersed. In that chain of events I saw Providence as saving cancellation.



Escapes in the “Bogotá Humana”

In Bogotá I lived several episodes in which danger took on an urban face and guardianship manifested as precision.

For years I denounced certain politicians without major scandal. I understood my accusations as moral rather than forensic: I formulated them as defence, not as a judicial prosecution. I am also an actor and learnt to carry myself as a survivor of my nation.

Of eight attacks that were aborted or failed, I recall some for their clarity.

One began with a drink. A man threw scopolamine into it and ordered me to drive him to my flat. On the way I spoke to him with the frankness that faith produces:

—If you intend to harm me, your plan will unravel. The protection of Jesus is with me.

He laughed.

He presented himself as poor. He said he needed help. I, in my nobility—nobility the world confuses with vulnerability—gave him my Nikon camera with lens (of high value), a Samsung tablet, and my French passport, a coveted object in dark markets.

Once at home I devoured kiwi, rich in vitamin C. I held to the certainty that the vitamin would drive the poison out. He wanted me to pack my iMac. I explained that I used it for a documentary. Then he asked me to drive him, in my car, to his house. I understood that there the circle would close: steal and eliminate. I agreed in order to



buy time. We went downstairs. And when we reached the entrance of the car park I saw the point of protection: the porter, a human witness, a visible barrier.

I told the thug calmly:

—It's better if you take a taxi.

The porter was watching. The criminal gave way. At the corner he took a taxi and asked me to get in. I chose the boundary:

—I'd rather go back home.

His face showed disbelief. Yet he restrained himself under the inquisitive gaze of the taxi driver.

—Give me the taxi money!

I handed him twenty thousand pesos. Money is a trifle when it saves a life.

The next day I went to hospital. They analysed my blood and, once again, found no traces. I write this and I know the modern reader expects the adverb "miraculously"; it is correct, because mere coincidence does not explain so many rescues.

Then an episode occurred that unmasked the inquisitorial clergy who sought to destroy me.

The following morning the bell rang insistently. Whoever had come had improper access, because the porter should not have allowed her to go up to my floor. It was Socorro, a colleague from my university, with whom I had arranged to meet at midday. Socorro had congenital problems that left her at a disadvantage among "normal" people. She was limited, yet ambitious, and she cultivated influential friendships—the very same people who were sending her now, people she obeyed with childish obstinacy because of her limited reasoning.

I saw at once that the clergy had sent her to confirm the assassin's work from the night before. I, already recovered though with a headache, dismissed her vehemently. She insisted on coming in, no doubt to reinforce the drug dose. My distrust grew. Her insistence revealed purpose, not courtesy. In the end she left, frightened by the scandal she was already causing as I rejected her at the door of my flat.

I remembered then an episode with a priest whom I held in great esteem. Two mornings he made me wait four hours in his office without seeing me. On the third morning he summoned me and I arrived at eleven, already accustomed to his delays. Then the prelate

rebuked me harshly, as only a mother does. His scolding had a strange texture: it was not merely correction; it was an examination. I saw clearly that the Vatican was, in truth, testing my degree of loyalty to its despotic ringleaders. That was a spiritual ordeal: the Church as a testing ground, the clergy as an apparatus of surveillance, and me as the observed subject.

That layer—modern inquisitions—added a different fear, a fear colder than a knife: the fear of being read, filtered, subjected to tests beneath masks of piety.

The Knife-Men of Palermo: The Full Sequence and the Symbolic Sign

The Palermo scene was a choreography of seconds. It was around half past six in the evening, in a dark area, with traffic flowing. I was crossing near the Caracas, and I saw two men coming down from Carrera 13 with long knives, gleaming like a declaration. They planted themselves before me with the assurance of men who had rehearsed the scene.

—Today we have this for you!

I crossed the Caracas to the opposite side. A torrent of cars prevented them from following me. I crossed Calle 45 just as they were crossing the Caracas. That allowed me to clear the Caracas back towards the eastern side. They persisted. I jumped onto the central divider of TransMilenio. I considered entering the corridor and paying the fare, and I saw the trap: being packed like a sardine in a tin. I chose to keep walking, searching for air, searching for space "under God's open sky".

The lights changed. They watched me with blazing eyes from the opposite pavement, about ten metres away. I felt that my movements had been precise. And I saw, too, that the slightest error would have been enough for me to become their prey. That awareness turns into miracle what the world calls reflex.

Then a taxi passed. I hailed it. I got in. From the window I saw the two of them cursing me.

It was too much; it was the eighth attack ordered by Mayor Petro, a wolf in sheep's clothing. I asked God for help. I posted a line by Zapata online:

—If you want to be a bird, fly; if you want to be a worm, crawl; but do not cry out when they crush you.

Two days later my chief persecutor suffered a dreadful blow: his pet, a little dog named Bacatá, was found dead without any explanation. That intimate humiliation—a baleful sign upon his household, a loss that reveals the wrath of God—held him back. It was July, and the street attacks against me ceased.

The experience left me with a growing nausea towards the capital. In August I moved to Bucaramanga.

The Invisible Beating: Cinemark, Karate, and Disappearance

In Bucaramanga another episode occurred in which protection manifested as literal disappearance.

In mid-2009, a student with aggressive problems—whom I had reported to the faculty board—followed me at night, from my house to Cinemark. I was going with a girlfriend to see the premiere of *Los Viajes del Viento*, by Ciro Guerra. The student came with a friend wearing a threatening expression. As we left, he approached and insulted me. Later his academic protector narrated it with a public smile, as though the insult were a merit: “he swore at his mother”.

I ignored him and continued with my friend to collect my car in the car park. We saw them hide behind a pillar next to my vehicle, fists clenched. I looked at my friend and said what I felt as an inevitable reality:

—If they want a fight, they’ll have one.

My friend made a fearful face, as one who already imagines blows. I advanced boldly and turned my body into a Karate-dō stance—an art I learnt in childhood—ready for impact.

And when I turned towards the pillar... the space was empty. They had vanished.

My friend could not believe it either. We were surrounded by empty parking bays, only broken up by occasional pillars. They had simply dissolved before our eyes. And stranger still: they vanished from the rest of my life as well. I never had to see that man again. I had done him favours; I had given him time, knowledge. He even once dreamed that I said I would leave, and he argued with me:

—No, no, no. You’re not leaving. You have to teach me many things.

And, in fact, my trip to India was delayed by another year, during which I taught him. He received my knowledge and, in his way, repaid it with daggers.

Another student later told me something that explained such ingratitude among those pupils: that everyone who passed through my courses went on to succeed, to obtain excellent positions. And indeed, my way of thinking—the one you are reading in these pages, dear reader—opens horizons, breaks moulds, and proves that life is built according to our will, because God provides every tool if we work with honesty and love.

Goodness creates reality. Goodness is the force that moves the universe. It is the source of white magic: that which produces luminous effects without a bitter invoice.

The other magic—the black—achieves effects and charges dearly, because it invokes shadows that grant favours devoured by time, and present their bills for eternity.



15. The Law of Karmic Balance

Do we not all suffer, almost daily, temptations to do wrong? Anyone who returns home from the supermarket and finds, among their groceries, a bottle of wine that was not charged knows that the right thing to do is to take it back. And yet, how many people actually do so?

The first question arises naturally: do you wish karmic balance to be understood as an objective moral law or as a providential historical tendency? For me it is a fact, because I have seen it in the daily events of my life. And yet that fact has another dimension: it is as though I had been born with that knowledge.

The first serious play I wished to write was a variation on Agatha Christie; the second I wrote at the age of fourteen and it was called *Onreïfni*, that is, hell in reverse. In it, the protagonists discovered that if one behaved badly, one created—opened the doors to—trouble, mishap, misfortune, as the result of ill-intentioned ethical actions; good fortune and goodness were there the result of our good ethical actions, of our kindness, of our sacrifices.

The Generous Shopkeeper and the Reprimanded Builder

In this regard, I recall, for example, what a security guard from Bogotá once told me: the story of Don Pelayo, a shopkeeper and owner of a small grocery store. One day he realised that his business was destined to fail. Orders had ceased, bankruptcy was imminent, and he had barely fifteen million pesos left as capital. There seemed to be no way out.

He then gathered his two sons and said to them: “Let us gather everything together—the sacks of rice, of sugar, whatever remains in the storeroom—and let us give it away, just as Jesus teaches in the Gospel.”

The three of them loaded what little they had left and took it to the poorest neighbourhoods of the city. There they distributed everything. They returned empty-handed. Nothing remained.

And they waited.

Then the miracle occurred. All of a sudden orders began to arrive: requests to send tonnes of grain to remote regions. With the advance payments they were able to restock the warehouse, and the business was not only saved but fully restored.

It was sacrifice that sustained them. It was renunciation that rescued them.

For this reason I affirm that goodness is a universal law. It is not something practised only by me: countless people of good heart practise it, often in silence.

Something similar is recounted in *The Cross and the Switchblade*: Wilkinson, its protagonist, tells how every time it seemed there was no money left to continue, unexpected donations would arise, coming from unforeseen places. And that, at bottom, applies to life itself.

As I have already mentioned, Gustavo—a house builder who had emigrated to Paris from Málaga—insisted on denying that this was true.

“Look at that crowd,” I said. “Anyone who arrives in Paris believes they are people who have always had everything, that in their comfort and smiles they have never been on the brink of losing their

jobs, their loved ones, or their lives. But the truth is that living entails the vertigo of losing everything every day, and that it is Christ who



sustains not only me, or you, but the millions of people who inhabit this world...

He was about to argue that he himself had been ruined by the crisis in Spain. But then he heard a voice that said to him: "No. I have indeed helped you."

He was struck dumb. Thick tears began to roll down his cheeks, while behind him the wide streets of Paris overflowed with people under the light of dusk.

"Because He died for us," I added, "because He chose to love us, even at the cost of sacrificing His well-being and His power in this world, and it is He who takes care of each one of us, especially against the wickedness harboured by so many lost souls."

He fell silent.

Some time later he let me know, through Pibe, a mutual friend, that his muteness and shame were due to the fact that he recognised the voice: it was that of Jesus, to whom he prayed fervently and from whom he sought help. Like most people, Gustavo believed that Christ scarcely listened to him. Yet before me He manifested Himself to him and made it clear that He had always been listening, and reproached him for having been on the verge of denying Him.

The balance between goodness and evil is universal.

What is astonishing is how the media try to conceal it: how, through temptations, through persuading us to have more money, through glorifying criminals who obtain easy money— as I have already said, the criminal is lazy, and every lazy person is foolish. The bandit only wants to amass wealth in order afterwards to do nothing, which is frankly naïve, for ill-gotten goods carry their own burden. We see thugs desperate to preserve their luxuries, slaves to legal proceedings, at the mercy of more cunning bandits, murdering their closest companions, like Macbeth, simply so that they themselves are not murdered.

Likewise, the concept of God as the supreme good for all continues to unite members of all religions.

Physics also posits the existence of a universal and invisible force that balances everything: matter and antimatter, energy and matter, action and reaction (as in Newton's third law in *Philosophiæ*

Naturalis Principia Mathematica, 1687: "To every action there is an equal and opposite reaction").

If you go out with a group of friends and one of them suggests that you go and beat an innocent man, you should know that you are provoking an evil against yourself. Evil—that handle-less spear, thirsting for blood, which, like a caged lion, seeks to wound all around it, especially those who release it.

But merely mentioning an ethical category such as "evil" already entails an offence against our utilitarian morality.

A European agnostic once told me: "We never worried about reflecting on whether God existed or not, simply because we were never taught to consider it at home or at school, but we were taught the Charter of Universal Human Rights."

His frame of reference for behaviour was the great legacy of the French Revolution, which, as French historians themselves have shown—see Marcel Gauchet in *Le Désenchantement du monde* (1985) or Larry Siedentop in *Inventing the Individual: The Origins of Western Liberalism* (2014)—Christianity found its secular reformulation.



But if religious theory was secularised, that universal power which binds life together and guarantees survival was not: the power to conjure past, present and future so that the imminent course of events is altered in favour of those who act justly. Such a belief requires patience not of years or decades, but of centuries. As the *Bhagavad Gita* prescribes:

"There was never a time when you and I did not exist, nor will there be a time when we cease to exist." (2.12)

From the very teachings of Jesus we see that destiny is subordinated to our conduct towards creation:

“Do not be deceived; God is not mocked: for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap” (Galatians 6:7, New Jerusalem Bible). “Therefore, whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them” (Matthew 7:12).

One who is murdered and immediately awakens in another world understands for the first time the value of the fiction that so interested him on earth, in the same way that the dreaming reader recognises the symbolic realities he inhabits.

For dreams, I insist, like literature, transcend reality. Is Hamlet less real than so many human beings who die leaving no memory? Is Don Quixote not real? Is even Luke Skywalker not real? Their existences demonstrate that the imagined is reality, for waking life is overwhelmed by imagination or by the world of the word, until it ends up adapting itself to its archetypes.

Some say that Jesus does not exist. Does it matter? We have a biblical character called Jesus who has changed history and continues to change it.

My own story, this book, would not have been possible without the existence of Jesus, who inspires this work as He inspires all my work.

I can say, like Antonio Machado, that I owe not a penny to anyone for my texts. I have worked to be independent; I have practised every kind of trade in order to subsidise that unproductive and fertile time in which writing takes place. These have been sacrifices embraced with joy.

The balance between goodness and evil is universal.

Jesus and the Demonic Temptation of the Left

I have not joined—though I well could have—the legion of sycophantic pseudo-poets of the Cuban regime, invited to conferences, housed in luxury hotels, and then docilely conditioned to live by singing praises to murderers such as Maduro or to accomplices of terrorism such as Gustavo Petro, until they receive multimillion-dollar contracts that allow them to live with the ease of Arab sheikhs.

I have preferred a modest but free life: the freedom to say what I think without fear of being branded with the usual labels—right-winger, fascist, bourgeois—that repertoire of clichés which the Cuban intelligentsia mass-produces. “A forgotten poor man”, “a modest existence”, “ostracised by the left”: labels which, paradoxically, have become the avant-garde fashion, progressive chic, the external sign by which the “wise man” seeks to distinguish himself from the ignorant.

The left thus became the most pernicious fashion in the history of universal literature: writers reduced to serfs of agendas, subjected to slogans. It reaches the extreme—as happens today with Laura Restrepo—

of
protesting
because
María
Corina
Machado is
invited to a
festival, and
of
announcing
one’s
withdrawal
for that sole
reason,
when that
woman has
killed no
one nor
taken up a



rifle, while the adversary she criticises has systematically tortured innocents and ordered murders in Chile and in Colombia.

Maduro is a murderer. And it is astonishing that even in the realm of artificial intelligence there persist arguments designed to whitewash these criminals with formulas such as “it has not been legally confirmed”. That perversity—the perversity of euphemism, of complicit formalism—has also infected algorithms. And that deserves to be recorded.

Justice acts here and in the hereafter, even if the media insist that it is scarce in this world; if that were so, we would already have ceased to exist. Honest and kind people are the salt of the earth, and as such they are protected by the universe.

Justice is as vast as we ourselves are. To put it better, I shall resort to a parable.

The Patient King

A king, owner of innumerable lands, decided to abandon his throne for a time and live as an ordinary subject within his dominions. Before departing, he asked himself how he should live there. He had several options: to present himself with crown and retinue, demand honours and be served; or to conceal his origin and live as a beggar, knowing cold, hunger and contempt; or, finally, to choose a simple and honest life, drawing no attention, working as necessary and sharing bread with whoever crossed his path.

The King reflected at length. He understood that if he showed himself as King, he would learn nothing: all would bow before Him and no one would tell Him the truth. If he lived as a beggar, the suffering would be great and his message might be lost in misery. But if he led a discreet and just life, without privileges or sought-after humiliations, he could know men as they truly were and be recognised solely by his deeds.

Thus he did. He lived among them without titles, without insignia, without claiming anything. And there he came to know the true nature of his dominions: he learned who his viziers were, which of them were the most perverse and hypocritical, those who oppressed the subjects, and who suffered in silence, with a thirst for justice, under the weight of their power.

Then the King raised his voice. And immediately he was persecuted to death by his perfidious viziers.

When that King returned to his kingdom, he did so richer than before: not in gold, but in knowledge. The hypocritical viziers were brought to trial and, as was customary with them, they portrayed themselves as victims while weaving their lies.

Only then did they recognise that their King was the beggar whom they had persecuted during his life.

Thus it is with us. For we are universal. For we are infinite. And because the kingdom—the true one—lies not before life, but after crossing its only frontier: Death.

The Invisible Prophet

Knowing this reality, I expected the Lord to take me early to His kingdom so that I might see there the compensations for the efforts lived here; but He insisted on protecting me, saving me from multiple attacks, in order to anoint me as a prophet and ask me to judge the living and the dead.

Thus I, who expected justice in the other life, find myself compensated with the gift of demanding it and imposing it not only in my own life—by denouncing in due time governments and individuals who defamed me and unjustly persecuted me from so many jobs—but also by imposing justice upon the living and the dead, one with Christ, Father and Holy Spirit.

For surviving in Colombia, my homeland, is equivalent to surviving the dangerous valleys of the United States in the 1870s. In Colombia many would steal upon realising that no one will discover them, that is, if they are “given papaya”. Little do they know that this mentality is the reason why Colombia has had so few upright, ethical rulers who love their country, and it is this mentality that drives organised crime to establish itself over the rights of others; they are criminals who take advantage of others’ trust (as reflected in the annual reports of Transparency International on the Corruption Perceptions Index, where Colombia usually ranks very low in institutional trust).

It is a vicious circle from which only honesty can redeem us, as I set out in *Colombia Corrupta* (2024).

It would suffice for a single upright Colombian to govern them for four years for things to change.

Herodotus relates in his *Histories* an anecdote that clearly illustrates the ancient law of balance. He recounts that the Egyptian pharaoh Amasis, a prudent ruler attentive to the signs of destiny, was an ally and friend of Polycrates of Samos, a tyrant whose fortune seemed to know no limits. That uninterrupted prosperity troubled Amasis. He knew that the gods envy excess happiness and that all prolonged abundance demands a price. He therefore advised

Polycrates to divest himself voluntarily of what he loved most, as a way of averting a disastrous end.

Polycrates obeyed. He took his favourite ring, an emerald seal finely engraved, and threw it into the sea. But the gesture proved useless. Days later, a fisherman found the ring in the belly of a fish and returned it to him. On learning of the prodigy, Amasis understood that his ally's fate was sealed: no sacrifice would succeed in breaking the chain of his fortune, and for that very reason his fall would be atrocious. He then broke the alliance. He was not mistaken. Polycrates ended up betrayed and died crucified by order of a Persian satrap.

Thus it is with those who live settled in constant fortune: they expose themselves, unknowingly, to misfortune. By contrast, those who learn to tread the rugged paths of life, accepting its limits and its harshness, are often blessed with calmer existences, far from the torments of those who seek to rule their own destiny and that of others.

The life of that tyrant is instructive. Before dying he saw his children fall and his body was left exposed to vultures. Where do these abrupt turns of fortune come from? It is a metaphysical question. Just as water seeks its level when disturbed, our lives tend to restore balance when we force them to reach ends through perverse means. Perversity is purged through suffering, just as patience is often rewarded with blessings.

Prophetic Dreams

“Without possessions, yet without lack of what is necessary”: that is the motto of those who entrust their lives to the paths that life itself opens to them. There is no experience—not even the bitterest—in which we are not granted a new portion of humanity.

Every writer writes his biography in every text he leaves behind. Aeschylus, a war veteran and victor over the Persians, chose that his epitaph should praise his sword more than his pen. It is impossible to read *Seven Against Thebes* without recognising in its verses the intimate dilemma between killing and dying, nor without perceiving in Eteocles the struggle against arrogance, when he accepts his destiny so as not to bear the dishonour of cowardice.

With a less martial sensitivity, Euripides reveals his scepticism towards martial glory in *The Trojan Women*. There, the women lament the folly of men who seek fame at the cost of the peace of their homes.

Nor is Don Quixote merely the fruit of Cervantes' imagination. It is also the testimony of his own defeats: his military campaigns, his wound at Lepanto, his long captivity in Algiers. All of this reappears transfigured in his work, like a veiled confession.

At the age of twenty-five I embarked on the writing of a film script about Lucrecia de León, which I entitled *The Spanish Prophetess*. She was a seer who announced the defeat of the Invincible Armada, that reckless fleet launched to subjugate England. The fulfilment of her prophecy brought her notoriety and drew dark forces upon her. Enemies of the King attempted to seduce her with excessive promises, even with the fantasy of seeing her become a female Pope. Lucrecia refused to kill. For this she was set aside, publicly humiliated and condemned to oblivion.

Her fate was painful, but also mysterious. In my visions, she managed to escape towards an unexpected prosperity in the New World, thanks to inexplicable events that silenced even the Inquisitor and the King himself.

In researching and envisioning her life, I was unknowingly preparing my own experience as a prophet.

For dreams, like imagination, anticipate reality.

As a child I dreamed that I had to cross a bridge without railings; halfway across I became dizzy and fell into the abyss. I would wake sweating and crying.

At other times it was the roof of a building that swayed beneath my feet, or the edge of a precipice from which I plunged. Eventually, weary of suffering so many nightmares, I planned to confront them.

I found myself once more at one side of the bridge. “It is the nightmare,” I told myself, pinching myself. To my surprise I felt pain. As soon as the ground began to sway from side to side I knew that my fall would be inevitable.

I commended myself to Jesus and, gathering momentum, voluntarily hurled myself into the void.

I slept like a seal that night and the nights that followed.

Here I must recall that less than a year later I was riding along the dirt track that led from the motorway to the Colegio Agustiniano, on the flatbed of a lorry with two little friends.

Others were playing football on the pitch by the roadside and some of them called out to me. Without thinking twice I threw myself to the ground, injuring myself and, as I later learned, suffering convulsions and losing consciousness.

I had no vital signs and the driver carried me inert to my home.

Just before my mother saw me, I awoke letting out terrible screams.

I had been in a placid region, and my return had been painful.

Only now do I see the clear relation between my dreams and what occurred. If my destiny was to fall against my will from the flatbed of that lorry, whether by accident or blow, my voluntary leap avoided, in the light of the dreams, a greater tragedy.

The following year I dreamed that as I took my one-year-old little sister in my arms, her head rolled across the floor.

Without knowing it, that nightmare prepared me for her painful death the following year.

In their most noble function, nightmares prepare us for the pain to come. All the losses of loved ones have been announced to me a year in advance.

In my adolescence I read Freud's work and his theses on the function of dreams, according to which they are the symbolic expression of repressed desires. Later, advancing in my readings of Carl Jung, I learned that dreams do not express only what is sexually repressed but also what is temporally repressed: in a universe where time is relative, applying Einstein's theory, the liberated psyche perceives past, present and future.

In 1999 I was directing in Porto my theatrical monologue *La Primera Cita* by Nórdida Ocampo, and I met an actress who continually suffered from a nightmare: she saw seven beautiful white fish in a round glass aquarium. She would take it in her hands to admire them, but, to her great distress, the glass would break and the fish would suffocate in the open air. Anguished, she watched them die and would wake screaming.

"Do you have a boyfriend?" I asked her, and when she nodded I added: "Do you use any contraceptive method?"

"Yes."

"The fish symbolise your boyfriend's semen falling on barren ground," I explained. "You feel guilty for killing them with your contraceptive method. Your screams are because you would prefer to nourish them with your body and conceive a child."

That actress acknowledged I was right, and her nightmares ceased.

Such is the very work of those who read palms, coffee grounds and stars: to find prior patterns in order to decipher the future.

Joseph's wisdom before Pharaoh consisted in interpreting, with an imagination entrusted to God, the dream of the lean cows and the fat cows for the welfare of Egypt (Genesis 41).

I have already mentioned that it was the year 1997 and I had a dream in which a Hindu man pointed out the city of New York to me, in the midst of which several buildings exploded. I had the dream again in 1998, but this time it was a flood, and after spending several months there, visiting my sister Lina, who worked in Queens, I sat down to write a novel about the city that would suffer an announced tragedy.

I published *New Manhattan Soirées* in 2000 in Bucaramanga. In one of its chapters the protagonist suffered an accident due to a detonation while travelling on the underground. My sister Lina, who since childhood has taken my dreams seriously, moved in mid-2000 to Orlando.

After the events of 11 September my novel had a second printing in Barcelona in 2002, after which my publisher José Cayuelas was murdered. Were there forces that saw in my novel a spiritual threat? José wanted to publish my second book in 2003.

In 2020 I dreamed that there was a great explosion two blocks from my building in Bucaramanga, and that flames spread through the city until they reached our rooftop, where I was praying to God.

Faced with the imminence of the fire, I accepted death with the calm with which I have faced it on several occasions.

Then, in the dream, I greeted Irnaldo, a schoolmate, with whom I fled from the fire, albeit by different paths. Two months later the events occurred through simultaneous explosions in Bucaramanga, at the Mercagán restaurant, two blocks from my flat, and in Barranquilla, where my companion Irnaldo had been hours earlier. Thanks to the prayers of a nation on edge, the fires were controlled (as reported in local media of the time).

As I have already mentioned, around mid-December 2019 I dreamed that a conflagration caused by the heat of the sun melted entire regions of the planet. My wife and I ascended into a craft that would take us to another world.

Oneiric Fallibility

The great limitation of dream interpretation is, of course, its fallibility. No interpreter or diviner guarantees that their predictions will be true in the immense garden of forking paths. Let us consider, in fact, the biblical prophets, who prophesy catastrophes that they themselves wish would not occur.

No one ignores, moreover, that prophecy is a lucrative business that attracts charlatans as honey attracts bees to a hive. Those diviners who are right in 50 per cent of their predictions become famous and survive by their profession, as we see in chronicles such as *La Bruja* by Germán Castro Caicedo (1988) or in noir films of the 1930s such as *Nightmare Alley* (1947, based on the novel by William Lindsay Gresham).

Nostradamus wrote about the King of Goodness, who would descend from heaven to teach the power of that sentiment in July 1999 (Century X, quatrain 72). I recently verified that in that month I flew from Porto to Paris to spend the summer with the family of my first wife. That coincidence persuades me to publish these ideas, perhaps as the seed of a coming utopia: that of the Kingdom of Heaven, governed by the most honest and cosmopolitan man or woman of each generation.

I place myself among the many poets, priests and seers who have conversed with God, as William James explains in *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (1902; lectures XVI–XVII on mysticism and XX on the pragmatic conclusions of faith): personal religious experiences—premonitions, visions, noetic certainties—are valid if they produce ethical and transformative fruits in the life of the individual and of society.

16. Taming Demons



The Book of Job begins with God dining with His angels and demons. Swedenborg, unlike Milton, composes angels and demons out of a feminine element and a masculine one. Demons or angels are formed by marriages that think and act as a single being.

In the Hebrew tradition, the figure who appears there is not yet the Christian demon with horns, nor the metaphysical prince of evil. He is *ha-Satan*: the accuser, the prosecutor, the contradictor. His function is not yet to destroy the divine order, but to test it, to examine God's favourites, to strain their loves, the falsities or limits of His creatures. That makes the story more unsettling: evil does not present itself as external to the cosmos, but as part of an economy of trial. Lucifer is a critic who has slipped the control of God, an agent of contrast who forces the righteous man to show whether his virtue is love or hypocrisy. Job rejects the temptations of illness (the flesh), poverty (goods), and solitude (the death of his children), but he is

tempted by explanation in front of his friends. The true test is to accept that justice cannot always be justified by logic.

The opening scene, therefore, disarms moralistic consolation: it does not guarantee that the world is simple according to causal logic. It does promise, yes, that the world is meaningful. The accuser, seated at the table of heaven, reveals that the most dangerous temptation is not that of sin, but that of its rational interpretation, invariably constrained and tainted by what is visibly mortal to the eyes of the reasoner: to believe that reversals are harmful to divine wisdom; to reduce God to Greek dialectic, as though He were an identifiable sophist, when His acts reach beyond the horizon of wellbeing and death, beyond necessity. For Christianity, Job's greatest temptation is also confronted by Jesus on the Mount of Olives, where the visions of His martyrdom and death are justified by the portent of the Resurrection.

The theological consequences of this certainty annul asceticism as a sacred practice. Buddha already discovered, on his way to Nirvana, that solitude is pleasant, but selfish; he went to a forest of ascetics, and after several years of silence he abandoned his solitude.

Asceticism, understood as isolation, does not overcome desire: it relocates it. It changes the object of attachment. Here an ancient genealogy of demons appears: Evagrius Ponticus, father of monastic discernment, knew that the tempter of the monk is not born from the world, but from enclosure. Prolonged isolation produces a specific creature: *acedia*, that noonday demon who despises passion and chills it with his apathy. While fallen angels shout and insult sinners, *acedia* depresses. It does not need its victim to commit crimes: it pushes him towards inner desertion, quiet resentment, bitterness without visible cause, irritation against the sacred itself.

That is why solitude can be pleasant and, nonetheless, selfish. It can look like purity and be spiritual narcissism. It can look like discipline and be cowardice. The error of the extreme ascetic is not his rigour: it is his rupture of the bond. He wants a heaven without community. He wants holiness without neighbour. And what Swedenborg suggests, with merciful cruelty, is that a heaven without neighbour is not heaven: it is a sterile periphery.

Swedenborg tells the story of a sage who did not get on with anyone and only aspired to live far from others. He died and God

fulfilled his wishes; the hermit was confined on the outskirts of heaven and hell, where he languishes for eternity.

The opening of the Book of Job, which seems like an immobile tableau, poses a theological dilemma. Job does not begin with the man suffering his misfortunes, but with a court gossiping about his prosperity. Heaven appears as a society: table, conversation, hierarchies, protocols, presences that do not fit the Manichaean moral. The image later imposed in sermons—God as an isolated judge, seated beneath a dome without noise—does not correspond to the ancient text. There God governs in plurality.

That majestic God, who nevertheless listens even to His rebels, alters the reading most commonly disseminated in our day, as George Bernard Shaw points out in his preface to *Man and Superman*: evil is not outside; it is not an invader that appears from an independent abyss, but an actor who sits in the very scene of order. Satan is not represented as a rebel general, but as an accuser. He does not come to destroy the cosmos, but to refine it. He is, to use a contemporary word, a prosecutor of the court. His defamatory function derives from the omnipotent order that tolerates him.



The greatest temptation is to rationalise God and His universe as though we too possessed the gift of space-time omnipotence. Job unsettles us because we identify with his perplexity, which indicates—within the limits of our reason—that calamities can also be permitted by God, and we can only accept His pressure, the injustice of His force, capable of tearing away masks to reveal that our faith was always transactional. But Job's faith is so great that he accepts even



death, which leads to scandal among those who confine religion to mortality, among those who argue for a God who only dispenses power and wealth.

That is why Job refutes Socratic dialogues and Aristotelian treatises, persisting instead as an anatomy of the incomprehensible.

Swedenborg, by removing the epic make-up from that drama, makes it more unsettling still. If angels and demons are not separate races, but

affective states organised in communities, then heaven and hell are not imposed prisons, but chosen societies. One settles where one's loves resound. One belongs where one's desire finds nourishment. The good ceases to be a prize or a label, becoming the music each life plays; evil is not a horn but an affinity, a pact among criminals.

In *Heaven and Hell*, Swedenborg states, with a sobriety that disconcerts, that angels and demons are post-mortem humans, not

species created apart. The difference is neither biological nor juridical, but affective. Heaven and hell are societies of love; one belongs to the community of what one loves. Thus punishment ceases to be an imposed penalty, becoming a chosen domicile. Condemnation is no longer the executioner's act, but the consequence of an affinity that becomes destiny. And if on earth hypocrisy hides the honest man and the wicked man behind the same smile, in hell masks fall, and murderers can only murder murderers, thieves rob thieves, intriguers intrigue against intriguers, rapists rape rapists; while honest people are freely honest with the upright, and the charitable give everything to the charitable without fear of encountering a demon who wishes to take advantage of their goodwill. The Swedish mystic explains that this occurs, first, because the fallen angel cannot conceal his deformed face beneath such evil intentions; and second, because the airs of paradise are so sweet that his sulphurous spirit cannot bear them for more than a few seconds.

His insistence on masculine/feminine harmony is not subordinated to the body, but to metaphysics: intelligence/thought, understanding/desire are pairs that dispense with the hormonal differentiations by which our societies reduce the masculine and the feminine to reproductive function. Spiritual unity is always a conjunction.

Here Swedenborg touches an intuition that runs through other traditions: the Gnostic *syzygos* as a spiritual pair, the Kabbalistic Adam Kadmon as a total figure, and the alchemical Rebis as a synthesis of contraries. Fulfilment is an integration that surpasses the ascetic tradition, for if fulfilment demands inner integration, it also demands an outward bond: there is no salvation outside relationship.

And in that vision, isolation cannot be a virtue, because every virtue, in the end, is tested in relation to others: patience, forgiveness, humility, justice, tenderness, firmness—everything requires the phenomenology of one's neighbour, his reciprocity.

Buddha, from another culture, reaches a similar intuition: solitude can be a pleasure disguised as purity. The ascetic can abandon the world, yet carry the world within him in the form of pride. He can keep silent for years, but that silence does not guarantee compassion. He can mortify the body, but that weakened body does not produce wisdom; it produces obsession. And that is why Buddha grows bored: not because discipline is bad, but because discipline without love

becomes a closed circle. Asceticism's great betrayal is not its hardness; it is its self-absorption.

Swedenborg's sage, who gets on with no one, is the final caricature of that error: he asks to live far from all, and he receives exactly what he asks for. He suffers no fire, no whip; he suffers an infinite neutrality. He is not punished with torture; he is punished with absence. He is not condemned with screams; he is condemned with nobody. And that image, so simple, is more terrifying than any furnace: an eternity without bond, without conversation, without friction, without embrace, without even an enemy. For even the enemy, if he is real, confirms that you exist for someone.

The Sirens of unjust fame, dirty money, and oppressive power

The first intentions of the human being are born of wonder. Before any moral choice, there is curiosity, fascination with what unfolds before intelligence and desire. Aristotle called it *thaumázein*: the original impulse that moves towards knowledge and awakens the spirit. That initial wonder carries no ethical weight; it is pure energy, openness, hunger for understanding.

Just as Ulysses felt drawn towards the song of the sirens, so too do we sail seas filled with evanescent pleasures. The human journey unfolds among stimuli that promise immediate fulfilment, quick routes to satisfaction, and shortcuts that seem harmless. Navigation is not forced: it is carried out with open eyes and hands on the helm.

Among those songs, three persistent offers stand out: fame that dazzles, money that facilitates, and power that orders. Each presents itself with refinement, with a courtesy that seduces. In exchange for allegiance, they offer belonging, security, and visibility. Their price is not announced; it is intuited over time.

That triad does not belong to any particular era. It inhabits the very structure of the human imagination. It echoes the temptations of the Gospel: bread that resolves hunger without obedience, miracle turned into spectacle, dominion promised as total efficacy. Unjust fame embodies spectacle: the leap towards applause. Deviated money takes the form of bread: wellbeing that becomes an alibi. Oppressive power offers dominion: the illusion of governing the world by means of a violence presented as necessary. That is why 666 does not

function as a cinematic number, but as a symbol of a world that celebrates itself in those three expressions.

Medieval demonology assigned names to that music: Mammon for fascination with wealth, Lucifer for exaltation of the self, Belial for the exercise of dominion without limit. Modernity does not create new figures: it translates them. It makes them elegant, institutional, reasonable. The most effective song does not sound like transgression; it sounds like common sense.

The road we travel appears strewn with sensitive zones that we cross with caution. In that exercise of prudence, a particular skill is acquired: learning to avoid detonations. Over time, that ability reshapes language, modulates protest, and turns deliberation into calculation.

The demonic pact takes the form of silence. Its initial cost is paid with omitted words, postponed phrases, strategic nuances. Hannah Arendt observed how evil can assume an administrative form: no one perceives himself as author; everyone performs his function. Solzhenitsyn identified the first threshold: inner self-indulgence. The intimate lie precedes all external censorship. First one falls silent out of prudence; then out of strategy; later, language loses its elasticity.

Thus censorship acquires a spiritual dimension. A possessed society is not one that invokes demons, but one that renounces naming the obvious. The demon feels comfortable in technical language that pretends neutrality, because neutrality without truth operates as collaboration.

Wise is the one who chooses to remain outside that influence, even when that entails harsh crossings. Exiles and shipwrecks become part of the itinerary. Trust is placed in the grace that sustains without clamour.

Socrates understood it clearly: moral deviation springs from ignorance—not from a lack of factual knowledge, but from the disconnection between knowing and acting.

Wonder (*thaumázein*) is fascination and curiosity, but above all, it constitutes the driving force of the spirit; and the desire to know should not exclude intuition or, as Peirce points out—recovering the same Aristotelian term—abductive judgments.

The risk appears when knowledge is exchanged for the renunciation of conscience. Contemporary sirens do not sing from the sea; they sing from the promise of ascent. They offer prestige,

belonging, permission. They offer the tranquillity of aligning oneself with what is convenient. They offer the sweetness of being celebrated by those who administer access to applause.

Wonder remains neutral. The danger does not lie in desiring to understand, but in desiring by imitation and not by truth. René Girard formulated it precisely: desire becomes mimetic. One does not long for the object for its intrinsic value, but for the gaze of another that consecrates it. Fame is sought for recognition; money for status; power for the sensation of superiority.

At that point the figure of the great imitator emerges, the perfect ventriloquist. He does not impose an external desire; he persuades you that your desire was born in freedom. He does not create passion; he redirects it towards what makes the will manipulable.

Thus the barter begins. Unjust fame, deviated money, and oppressive power do not arrive wrapped in clamour. They present themselves as reasonable opportunities, practical agreements, minimal concessions. They invite you to accept a small silence, then a larger one, then a silence that becomes habit. Over time, identity adjusts itself so as not to inconvenience.

The mines on the path are not only external. They are phrases one avoids, topics one circles, truths one downgrades, protests one postpones. One learns to walk carefully in order to keep one's seat at the table where bread is distributed. One cultivates a functional smile in the face of injustice—not out of adhesion, but out of convenience. Thus the right to deliberate is weakened, the right to say “no” without calculation.

Socrates insisted: ignorance takes many forms. Sometimes it does not consist in not knowing, but in knowing and simulating distance; in seeing and calling “nuance” what demands clarity; in replacing conscience with argument. Whoever lets himself be seduced by these sirens does not always become grotesque; often he becomes impeccable, reasonable, moderate. Moderation that coexists with abuse looks spotless.

Wisdom is manifested in the capacity to resist that influence, even when it entails losing platforms, invitations, or applause. Exile can be social. Shipwreck can consist in abandoning the comfort of belonging. Grace does not always grant triumph; sometimes it grants an inner pillar that cannot be negotiated.

Angels and Demons contend for us

In late 2003 I went through an intense experience of inner confrontation. Just as luminous forces intervene with discretion, dark forces accompany with persistence, attentive to provoke deviations.

Saint Ignatius warned of that constant presence. He described the enemy as a voice that incites disordered action. The human being moves between poles, between communities that elevate and communities that degrade.

To name that presence constitutes a form of resistance. Ignatius himself formulates it with strategic clarity: the adversary is strengthened in secrecy and weakened when exposed. He operates like a false lover who demands secrecy; his power feeds on shame. When temptation is expressed, it loses lustre, argument, and dominion.

From that understanding, this book acts as an exercise in spiritual hygiene. To name temptation is to disable its circuit. It is not a matter of amulets, but of spoken truth.

The value of this work lies precisely in that function. Its reception has been marked by cultural silences, sustained by the belief that personal temptations belong to the realm of the unnameable.

On one occasion, a person close to me appropriated a considerable sum of money. For hours thoughts of anger and fantasies of violent redress arose. When that current was exhausted, I resorted to an aspiration I had learnt in childhood:

*Sacred Heart of Jesus,
I trust in You.*

And I told Jesus (my idea of the supreme good) that I preferred to entrust to His discretion the injustice my friend was inflicting upon me.

Might I, in fact, have been mistaken? As Job cries out from his trial, while his friends condemn him for having been too good.

I calmed suddenly and closed my eyes, commending that worry to Jesus, when before me I clearly saw the figure of a thin demon, with chestnut-coloured fur and a foul face, who insulted me and, cursing me, rose into the air as though angels and archangels had seized him by the hair and dragged him away from me.

The impression was so unpleasant that I got up, calming my vision with the concrete objects of my flat three blocks from Hyde Park.

But it was not the first vision of the protection of God's angels.

Hatred has a way of disguising itself as justice. That is its venom: it promises repair, it promises balance, it promises to "set things right". But it does not repair you: it possesses you. The demon of hatred does not always push you to kill; sometimes it pushes you to brood, to repeat, to imagine scenes, to rehearse revenge, to compose mental speeches of destruction. It steals your day. It steals your breath. It steals your body. And in the end it does not punish the thief; it punishes the one who was robbed.

That is why Saint Ignatius is right: the demon demands secrecy. Hatred, to grow, needs silence. It needs you not to name it. It needs you to treat it as "normal", "deserved". And then confession—in the deep sense, not the bureaucratic one—becomes an act of spiritual hygiene. To tell the instigation, bring it to light, disable it by word.

The aspiration, in its humility, surpasses magical spell: it is direction of the soul. Instead of feeding the circuit of vengeance, the injustice is handed over to a higher judge. The anguish of being forgotten is annulled by surrender to a universal order, and one avoids the suffered harm becoming a lure to imitate those who harmed us. And then the vision appears as diagnosis. It is irrelevant to argue whether the demon is "real" or not, which would be trivial. The point is that temptation has a face when one looks at it without bargaining with it. The demon is that impulse that insulted, that demanded an act, that wanted to drag the will towards inner crime.

Classical theology distinguishes degrees of vision: imaginative and intellectual. Even if one concedes that certain images may belong to the field of imagination—and therefore be psychologically interpretable—their spiritual efficacy is not measured by literalness, but by what they unleash: whether they strengthen vanity or cut hatred; whether they excite fear or return discernment. What matters is not spectacle, but result: the demon does not need to "exist" as an exterior monster in order to operate; it is enough for him to be an inner mechanism that seeks to possess the will.

The decisive detail is that the demon rises as though expelled. The scene suggests an intervention, but also suggests something else: the demon loses when the soul does not negotiate with him. He loses

when hatred finds no complicity. He loses when injustice does not become justification.

The demon of Philadelphia



In *New Manhattan Soirées* I relate the experience I had with a being of malicious intentions in the city of brotherly love. I will recount it here exactly as it occurred, stripped of dramatisation.

It was a Saturday night in the summer of 1995; at the time I spent whole days watching classic European cinema, for I felt my film culture was deficient.

I went to bed around nine o'clock at night after turning off the lights, exhausted by fatigue.

A few minutes later I felt a strong presence beside me. Someone was in my room! I tried to open my eyes, but it was impossible.

I could hear the sighs of that being.

Then I saw myself in bed, and beside me a figure covered in torn rags, seen from behind; his head was also covered, as certain beggars do against the cold of winter.

I felt I had to get up at all costs. I made a supernatural effort and at last opened my eyes. At my side I saw that being, but I could not make out his face, hidden in the shadow of his improvised hood.

I felt he was suffering and required help.

So I decided to show him compassion.

I sat up and opened my arms as a sign of compassion and forgiveness towards that being; but, with a movement of his jaw, his hood slipped back, and I discovered a horrendous flayed demon, baring his jaws—a mixture of piranha and jaguar.

I screamed, and at that very moment the telephone rang.

I woke up sweating.

There was no one in my room, but all the lights in the flat were on!

I picked up the receiver and heard the voice of my neighbour from the fourth floor, a security guard at a nearby university, who lived by ingratiating himself with new Latin female students—those who arrived in Philadelphia to study and to free themselves from their patriarchal customs.

“I’ve got three girls tonight,” he told me, “and there are only two of us. Come over and meet them.”

Such was the shock I felt that I immediately refused his offer. The guard insisted, but there was no promise he could make that would change my mind.

The kindness I offered sprang from a serene certainty: Christ dwells in me. From that presence, compassion flows like a light that neither negotiates with darkness nor confuses itself with it. It is not indulgence or concession, but a way of being that keeps conscience intact. Pity is born from Christ’s love and remains clear even when it confronts hostility; it is not cowed by violence, but treats it with mercy.

The scene had the liminal character of a dense dream: a threshold in which the body seemed suspended and the presence acquired a tangible density. It can be described as sleep paralysis without reducing the experience to a diagnosis. Ancient traditions spoke of incubi and succubi not out of prurience, but because of the historical reiteration of nocturnal experiences of siege. Jung would have recognised there the irruption of the shadow: a face that asks for compassion and, when looked at with clarity, reveals its monstrous dimension.

Evil sometimes manifests openly and violently; at other times it adopts subtler forms. One of the most effective is fright, which can turn the kindest person into a killer. There is an apparent compassion that seeks provocation through sudden shock. But authentic mercy remains joined to lucidity.

Philadelphia is called the city of brotherly love, and it was there that my soul underwent one of its severest trials. The beggar covered in rags rejected my pity and mercy with rage; Christ’s love for His enemies enraged him. What a demon despises most is kindness that does not weigh whether it will be instrumentalised or not.

The gesture of opening one’s arms, which in the Gospel signifies welcome, becomes then the exact point at which the demon loses his power, understanding that a true Christian would rather die than harm anyone, even the most terrible of his enemies.

Later the Lord would reveal to me that demons, far from what so many exorcists preach, have no power unless, as God does towards Lucifer in the Book of Job, it is granted to them. And in emerging unscathed from that trial, God also granted me power over them, to the point that when my enemies invoke them to harm me, they treat me with reverence, even betraying the credentials of their invokers, asking that I condemn them and leave them at my mercy.

And then the neighbour calls with his offer, in the banal tone of one who believes life is nothing but pleasure and opportunity. The telephone call, at that instant, was also conditioned by that spiritual vision. The material world rose with a warning in which a demon hovered: the demon of lovelessness? of cruelty? of abuse? of crime? Whatever it was, the Lord was indicating clearly, through that vision, that I must not accept that revel seasoned with lustful delights.

The lights switched on in the flat added an unsettling detail: something was touched, something altered, though rationally it could not have happened.

The double demon

The third encounter I had with a demon—or, as I shall detail, with a possessed man—occurred in 2015 in Bogotá. I was in a café, reading a book, when an old acquaintance approached me: Norberto, a theatre actor whom I had trained in the early 1990s in my group Arte Facto Teatro.

Since Norberto did not memorise the lines of his role, I replaced him on the eve of the première, a decision that earned me his youthful rancour.

Twenty-five years passed and the reunion occurred without our greeting each other.

He asked what I was reading; I showed him a volume of plays by Tennessee Williams and he began to discourse on his best-known pieces.

"It seems you haven't read his lesser-known works," I said, "such as *The Night of the Iguana*."

He changed the subject and told me he brought different worlds together. Since he had studied sociology at the National University, and now, he said, worked at the University of Xenaria, it took little effort to deduce that he was an elite leftist, a *santero* who reconciled revolutionary and profitable ideologies for the mental wellbeing of the children of Bogotá's most prominent families.

That acquaintance asked me about my interest in God. I perceived in Norberto a malevolent intensity that sought to provoke me; as in the experience I had in Philadelphia, I answered his questions with kindness and sincere affection.

One of the great teachings of Christianity that I integrated into my life, I insist, was to love my enemies. When he asked what interest God had in manifesting Himself to me, I replied sincerely:

"To protect me from those who might wish to attack me."

Then Norberto twisted his lips in disdain and, setting his eyes ablaze with a sinister gleam, said: "Let's see how you react to this."



He lunged his head towards me. I remained unperturbed, trusting in the omnipresence of God, the same one who had promised me on 1 June 2011 that He would always be my protector.

Before me, Norberto's neck branched into three heads of furious demons who, baring their fangs and showing serpent tongues, approached to within a few millimetres of my face.

I observed them with curiosity. By then my faith had already dissolved the primal panic I had felt before a demon in Philadelphia around 1995.

Then Norberto drew back and recovered his normal appearance.

"Two 'Niño en Cruz'?" I asked him, alluding to the Caribbean *aseguranza* (or pact) that some call a "prayer in reverse", so common among Colombian guerrillas and paramilitaries.

Norberto looked at me, displeased, and stood up.

"Sit down, Norberto," I said, "and tell me how you did that."

"No!" he exclaimed in a weak voice, his ego lacerated by my serenity.

Only when I stood up did I notice he was extremely frail: thin and of short stature. He left with a pale complexion, staggering between the tables.

Norberto had practised the *niño en cruz* not once but several times, which is equivalent to selling one's soul not to one but to several foul beings; that was why he showed me, at will, three heads that possessed him.

He had surely tormented his victims in that way.

I feel compassion for those who give two thirds of their lives to entities that end by torturing them and driving them mad.

They renounce the free will they demand of God, only to hand it in advance to the torments of the infernal society that possesses them.

That display of demonic heads depends on the other person's fear. When it finds no panic, it deflates.

The medieval tradition speaks of pacts in which someone cedes his freedom for youth or wealth, as though excessive beauty or the accumulation of unnecessary goods were not already burdensome yokes to carry.

And if in Philadelphia I confronted an intimate apparition that ended up demonstrating the protection of goodness, what happened

in Bogotá was a human collision. There, evil did not arrive as an isolated spectre, but as the will of a living being who intended to harm me. The phrase “let us see how he reacts to this” reveals a revenge conceived over many years and destroyed in a single instant.

The theatre of evil always exaggerates: it multiplies heads, shows fangs, unfurls serpents. That grotesque aesthetic is a symptom of its desperation. Where there is true spiritual power there is simplicity. Where there is imposture there is excess. Norberto—thin and weak—contrasts with his ferocious heads that promise dominion and yet subject him to slavery.

The practice of the *niño en cruz*, mentioned with bluntness, introduces a theme society prefers to deny: there are ritualisations of crime. There are economies of fear. There are violent superstitions that mingle with ideologies and with business.

The Manitu

It is true, moreover, that each person carries his hidden demons, which surface when they are invoked.

The Native peoples of North America speak of animals within; the wildest are the serpent, the wolf, and the eagle.

The Algonquins also believe that every object has its *manitu*, a belief also held by Buddhists and Hindus. While I lived in India I realised that whenever someone accidentally bumped my legs, the locals would bow ceremonially to ask forgiveness from the god of my legs.

To live in harmony with God is also to live in harmony with all the objects of the universe. To do evil is to grant the animosity of objects and living beings against oneself.

Psychology has another, more scientific and less speculative version of these anomalies of the human psyche.

What for the mystic is a possession, for the psychologist is a psychosis. The work of both is to find the causes of the illness in order to prescribe its remedy.

Paranormal elements, such as a head dividing into three, can also be reduced to delusions of the imagination—a wildcard applied to any memory.

Harder to explain are cases of dying men who do not die, as happened with a peasant in Colombia in the 1980s. His killers could

not kill him even with machetes. Faced with such scenarios, science has no choice but to ignore them.

I have already mentioned the case of a converted spirit whose femur and skull were stolen from the cemetery so that he might wander in torment, infecting with his despair those who ingested earth from his grave.

Here the convergence is greater than it seems. Mircea Eliade saw the sacred as a structure of the world, and Hillman spoke of gods as psychic patterns: forces that organise meaning. The *manitu* is animism, but also the recognition that the world responds as a thinking inanimate being. That is why evil is not only moral: it is ontological. It disorders the cosmos. It does not only break consciences: it breaks invisible relationships.

That idea connects with the karmic law I have already described: the universe becomes the unjust person’s adversary because of his disharmony. To cause harm is not only to “sin”: it is to trigger return, animosity, resistance in the fabric of the world.

The *manitu* opens the chapter towards an anthropology of mystery: an intuition in which the universe is not a set of neutral objects, but a network of relationships. In that network, evil is not only a “moral” act, but a dissonance. When harm is caused, something in the fabric responds. The ceremonial respect paid to the “god of the legs” in India can be read as superstition, but also as the recognition that another person’s body is not an obstacle: it is a sacred place. To ask forgiveness is not formality but an adjustment of harmonies.

Psychology translates those languages into clinical categories: psychosis, delirium, projection, trauma. But even psychology, when it is honest, knows that not everything is exhausted by vocabulary. There are limit experiences where explanation falls short, or where explanation “exists” but does not satisfy what occurred. The peasant who does not die despite the machete becomes a problem for the rationalist narrative: he does not fit its frame. And science, many times, when it cannot integrate, chooses to ignore. The effort to refute is sacrificed out of metaphysical laziness; like Aesop’s fox unable to reach the grapes, the agnostic prefers to look away from these realities, explaining that in the end he never wished to understand them, and that it is not necessary either for his supposed life of wisdom.

The Attempted Attack on Hugo Noël Santander

I must relate here the most recent attack, perpetrated by the one I saw as the son of a Pope. I refer to the murderer who travelled from the corridors of the Vatican to the University of Xenaria, preparing for years to kidnap me, torture me, and present me to the world as a suicidal artist.

INT. NEWSROOM. STUDIO.
SUBTITLE: Bucaramanga, 2
September 2022.

POLITICAL SCIENTIST
The years of anguish of our generation will dissolve after the death of the Queen of the Celts. She represented the *Ancien Régime*, where indolence permitted hunger and war, under an oppressive philosophy that we all—let us admit it—consented to.

NEWSREADER
Last night a storm broke over the road from Girón to Bucaramanga, causing a mountain to collapse, which fell upon three individuals so far unidentified.

Interference sound.

NEWSREADER
Confidential sources assure us that they were

mercenaries for hire: one Irishman, one Colombian, and one American. All three were active members of a Facebook group dedicated to the 1970s/80s series *The Omen*.

The Antichrist is not, as I mention elsewhere, an individual; he is a logic of power that needs the risen Christ as its absolute enemy in order to justify preventive crime. In its hypocrisy and perfidy it is he who presents as a monster the one who comes to fight it with arguments and revelations, as well as by portents. The film series *The Omen* expresses what society presumes without anyone raising a voice in protest. It is enough to call an innocent child the Antichrist, slandering him with fables such as having been conceived by a she-wolf, for his murder to be justified.

It matters little that the child gradually reveals himself as protected by the risen Christ; he is called the Antichrist and his death is necessary—an act of heroism justified as hygiene.

Here the demon adopts his contemporary mask in the media. The beast is now the progressive narrative of our era, which cancels whoever dares question it, in the same way the Inquisition condemned dissenters to the stake. It presents itself as version, as news, as leak, as “confidential source”. And that is one of its most effective forms: turning violence into a segment, into an event that passes across the screen and is then forgotten. The tragic chorus of antiquity sang destiny; the modern news bulletin anaesthetises destiny. It turns evil into a statistic and, by repetition, makes it normal.

The connection between cultural imagination and the justification of violence is the greatest crime of the media.

In *The Omen*, the moral structure is inverted with dangerous cunning. The world sympathises with assassins who want to destroy first a child, then an adolescent, and then a man who kills no one, but whom they take for a murderer simply because a group of religious people say so. That inversion is the pedagogy of fear: the idea that killing can be virtue if one kills “preventively”; the idea that innocence can be sacrificed for a hypothetical future; the idea that murder becomes pure when adorned with prophecy.

What is installed there is not the figure of the Antichrist, but paranoia about the Antichrist as an instigation. The trap is not a demon who comes to kill, but believing the demon has come to kill, so that you kill first. It is the oldest trick: to convince you that evil is outside and that you will only stop it if you abandon your limits. And when you abandon your limits, you have already lost: you become what you claimed to be fighting.

The temptation of the media and influencers today is to become a demon out of fear of a demon. One passes from fear of prophecy to the cult of prophecy. One passes from fear of evil to the pleasure of destruction. And most grave of all: one passes from faith to suspicion.

That suspicion presents itself as theology. Suspicion becomes politics, and then becomes ethics. Then anyone can be guilty, because guilt no longer needs facts, but narratives.

The world ends up sympathising with the assassins because, in that scheme, the assassins are doctors extirpating a tumour. That



metaphor is the soul of moral totalitarianism. Every fanaticism believes itself curative. Every executioner imagines himself a therapist. And there lies the essence of 666: a world that loves itself so much that it justifies any crime so long as it keeps its throne.

17. The Miracles of Montreal

Healing springs from a living inner order. It appears when the heart attains coherence, when intention aligns with the good, and when the soul acts with transparency. The body responds to that state because life as a whole participates in a single spiritual harmony. The pure heart acts as an organising centre: it orients vital energy, gives direction to matter, and restores the balance of being.

Pure intention possesses creative force. When the good is sought for the good itself, conscience becomes clear and the will acquires transformative power. That inner clarity orders experience, guides decisions, and disposes the human being towards the restoration of wholeness. Healing arises as the fruit of that orientation, as a natural effect of inner rectitude.

In contemporary discourse people speak of healing through energies. That intuition recognises that reality responds to inner states. The essential root lies in the ethical quality of intention. Life responds to the subject's inner truth, and that truth expresses itself as moral coherence. Technique describes a phenomenon; rectitude of heart reveals its cause.

Practices such as reiki describe the circulation of a vital force. In that vision, the heart appears as a channel. A deeper understanding places the origin in inner rectitude: ordered intention becomes an active principle. The human heart then acts as a source of harmony, and the body responds to that inner authority.

The ancestral traditions of indigenous, Mesoamerican and pre-Columbian peoples express this wisdom with clarity. In them, the word, intention, and spiritual coherence orient the body towards healing. The body listens because it participates in a living intelligence. Each organ responds to the soul's direction when the inner centre is aligned.

Contemporary science offers an analogous language. Microbiology describes the human body as a complex ecosystem, inhabited by communities of microorganisms that influence behaviour, tastes, and dispositions. The body acts like a community

sensitive to inner orientation. When intention is ordered towards the good, that community enters into harmony and cooperates with processes of restoration.

Moral coherence orders the cells. Good intention aligns the systems. Just thought stabilises the processes. The body responds as a living unity that recognises meaning. Healing then appears as the expression of that restored inner order.

The human spirit possesses awareness of the good. That awareness orients life. When a person lives in consonance with it, the body cooperates and accompanies. When an inner fracture arises, the organism expresses the conflict. Illness manifests as the language of the soul, signalling an ethical tension still awaiting integration.

Life as a whole is structured as a moral system. The body participates in that structure. The organs respond to the subject's inner truth. Biology becomes an incarnate word. Each imbalance points to a direction that calls for coherence.

Innocence occupies its own place within this order. The child lives in a state of spiritual openness, inscribed within a web of bonds that transcends him. Early illness reveals the complexity of that web and the moral responsibility of the environment. Childhood purity shows closeness to what is essential and calls forth conscious care.

People with intellectual disabilities embody a way of life stripped of calculation. Their existence radiates simplicity, presence, and truth. They fulfil a spiritual function: to remind society of the primacy of care, tenderness, and unconditional love. Their lives express meaning and call for a collective healing of the human bond.

Pets participate in this same logic of harmony. Companion animals live anchored in presence, fidelity, and direct attention. Their closeness orders the emotional atmosphere of the home, calms the heart, and accompanies processes of recovery. Relationship with them awakens care, constancy, and affection—virtues that dispose the body towards balance. In their gaze and in their rhythm, life remembers the simplicity of goodness lived.

Poverty also participates in this spiritual order. It acts as a state of trial and inner purification. Where the heart remains clean, life is experienced with fullness. Voluntary renunciation orders the spirit. Simplicity draws one closer to the centre. Happiness springs from inner coherence and strengthens the health of soul and body.

Society proposes external models of wellbeing. The spirit responds to another measure. Harmony with God establishes true equilibrium. From that equilibrium, illness yields ground and the body recognises the authority of the ordered soul.

Healing manifests when intention is purified. It arises as the consequence of a life aligned with the good. The spirit in harmony



restores the order of being, and the body accompanies that movement with processes of restoration.

To heal expresses an ancient law: life responds to inner truth. The pure heart governs the body. Upright intention organises matter. Spiritual coherence restores health.

That law brings with it another, more demanding one: authentic healing walks alongside

discernment.

Our age celebrates effects and confuses causes. The world admires the visible result and forgets to ask about the origin. Healing occurs on multiple levels, and the body may respond to techniques, suggestions, environments and subtle forces; even so, the spirit recognises the source. There are cures that momentarily order matter and leave the soul's confusion intact. There is also a healing that reorders conscience, purifies intention, and returns the person to truth. The first impresses. The second converts.

Spiritual modernity is characterised by an abundance of offers without inner hierarchy. Creeds are mixed as brands are mixed. Methods are collected. One changes teacher with the same ease with

which one changes diet. That phenomenon does not arise from ignorance but from an excess: an excess of promises, an excess of techniques, an excess of “results” detached from moral truth. In that market, the good appears as an instrument, and spiritual experience becomes a catalogue. That is why discernment becomes indispensable: not everything that relieves comes from the same principle; not every light has the same origin; not every inner peace leads to truth.

I do believe in God 100%

Towards the middle of 2012 the Lord sent me to Montreal, to bear witness to his omnipresence in a spiritual city, yet one under the influence of superstition and spiritual fashion. Montreal breathed an ancient religiosity through its stones and chapels, and at the same time displayed, in its streets and conversations, an imported spirituality turned into symbolic merchandise. Historical Catholicism still sustained the city’s moral ground, though many perceived it as one option among others. The language of faith had become just another form within the shop window.

There I attended Mass at the Chapel of Notre-Dame-de-Bon-Secours. As I came out, a beggar fell to the ground in agony and I blessed him with the oil that the Virgin Mary had given me in Madras months earlier. The poor man could not breathe and had already fainted; he regained consciousness with my blessing and immediately got up to curse his absent friends. Like the beggar in *Simon of the Desert* (1960), to whom the saint gives back his hands, that heart remained dominated by old chains, without giving thanks for providential help.

I walked away, but the scene did not go unnoticed. Laura, a woman of about eighty, came up to me to ask whether I had the gift of healing the sick. I said yes and she invited me to visit Saint Joseph’s Oratory the next day. Since my mother had entrusted me with that task, I accepted; she told me that Elisa, a friend of hers, a young blonde woman of thirty-three, would pick me up in the morning.

The next day Elisa picked me up very punctually in a sports car; she was a dynamic, pleasant woman. She told me she was very sad, because she had a relationship with a pilot who saw her only once a month. I took her remark as flirting and told her that for several years I had been looking for an honest life companion. She asked me

whether I could heal her mother, who had been suffering from a strange pain for thirty years. I told her yes, with the faith inspired by the Gospels.

We picked up Laura and went to Saint Joseph’s Oratory, where I learned of the great work of Brother André, to whom the father of Jesus entrusted the construction of that beautiful church. When people asked André how, being the doorkeeper of a congregation, he would obtain the money to do it, he replied: “Saint Joseph will take care of that.” And Saint Joseph took care of it diligently. Montreal still remembers the hundreds of miracles that Brother André performed in the name of the putative father of Jesus.



It was there that Elisa told me she believed in God, but also in the Hindu, Chinese and African gurus who swarmed in Montreal.

“What a sadness,” I said, “when believing only in God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit would be enough.”

She then asked me how much I believed in God.

“100%,” I said.

She clicked her tongue incredulously:

“No one believes 100% in God.”

“I do,” I said.

And at that precise moment the clouds in the sky opened to make way for one of the most beautiful sunsets I have ever witnessed.

*I, Petrus Romanus*_____

I had my camera on my lap, so I took several photos. “It is God manifesting,” I said, recalling William Blake’s poem:

To the Evening Star

*Thou fair-haired angel of the evening,
Now, whilst the sun rests on the mountains, light
Thy bright torch of love; thy radiant crown
Put on, and smile upon our evening bed!
Smile on our loves, and while thou drawest the
Blue curtains of the sky, scatter thy silver dew
On every flower that shuts its sweet eyes
In timely sleep. Let thy west wing sleep on
The lake; speak silence with thy glimmering eyes,
And wash the dusk with silver. Soon, full soon,
Dost thou withdraw; then the wolf rages wide,
And the lion glares through the dun forest.
The fleeces of our flocks are covered with
Thy sacred dew; protect with them with thine influence.*

Laura and Elisa were moved without abandoning their scepticism. In Laura that scepticism had a serene quality, like someone who has seen too much suffering to demand proofs of heaven. In Elisa scepticism took the form of excess: too many options, too many voices, too many simultaneous paths. Laura embodied silent faith: a life saved that does not make a spectacle of its salvation. Elisa embodied mixed faith: a conscience that receives, yet seeks to neutralise the inner debt that receiving brings with it.

Then Elisa asked me to go and see her convalescent mother the next day.

Twenty years of pain

Elisa drove me back to my hotel but, out of a caprice that is particular to Anglophones, decided to drop me ten blocks away. She wanted to make clear that she was not the kind of woman easily generous—an attitude that is not rare in post-feminist Anglophone culture. She showed a certain impatience and told me I had to get out quickly. I obeyed, unsettled, and since her sports car had only two

_____ *Hugo Noël Santander Ferreira*

doors, as I got out through the narrow compartment I had to jump, throwing my whole body weight on my right big toe, which had already been fissured three years earlier in a car accident caused by some Amazonian witches (Taitas) who had cursed the hard drive of one of my passengers, a lady who had recorded their rituals to make a documentary that ultimately did not please the sorcerers. My toe



opened again, causing me immense pain.

In that reopened fissure my fragility became flesh. The toe sustains forward movement; the toe makes walking possible; the toe governs the balance of the gait. A wound at that point immobilises, halts, forces one to choose between mission and confinement. The fissure arose precisely on the eve of a healing: as though pain were asking for a place, as though suffering were seeking a body in which

to express itself, as though the witness were carrying part of another's burden.

It was, above all, a test of faith.

I returned limping to my hotel and shut myself in to pray.

"I am in a hotel, and I will not be able to go out if my toe is fissured again, at least for fifteen days. I cannot do that," I told myself. "Brother André," I prayed in faith, "I ask you to heal me so that tomorrow I may heal that poor woman."

I lay down after reading several psalms.

The next day I had breakfast and went out, still limping, to meet Laura, who told me we would visit the monastery of the brothers of Brother André's community, where we would have lunch in a restaurant specially conceived by them to serve Montreal's beggars.

We went there and met the brothers of the Congregation of Holy Cross. Laura did not believe me when I told her that the bone of my big toe was fissured, assuming it was an excuse not to go and heal Elisa's mother.

She went off to speak with her friends and I took the opportunity to visit Brother André's statue, and asked him in faith and humility to heal my fissured toe. When I came out of his sanctuary I put my foot down without pain and rejoined Laura.

"What happened to your limp?" she asked me.

"Brother André healed me," I said with a simplicity that did not quite convince her.

That healing reflected the Lord's grace through the intercession of Brother André.

We had lunch. Elisa picked us up, drove us to her house, and introduced me to her mother. She was not alone, but accompanied by a neighbour who looked at me with atheistic scepticism.

"Are you the one who performs miracles?" she asked me with contempt.

I did not answer her and I laid my hands on Elisa's mother, asking the Lord to heal her. I clearly saw the image of Christ smiling and I told her she was healed. The woman cried out that she no longer had any pain and stood up.

She asked me whether she owed me any money and I told her no, that I did it because her daughter had asked me to. She did not like my remark and asked me whether she was healed for ever, or only for a few days.

"For ever," I said.

Then the neighbour went out to notify several neighbours, and within a few minutes a white-bearded man came in.

"He is my neighbour Edward," Elisa's mother told me, "he has looked after us since my husband died."

"Pleased to meet you," I said to Edward.

The neighbour looked at me with a sardonic gaze and asked me to sit down.

In that sitting room a social law of the miracle was revealed, one that upsets the balance of relationships. The recipient is exposed. The witness feels challenged. Free goodness introduces an asymmetry: someone has received without being able to pay. Modernity readily tolerates what is bought; radical gratuity demands an inner transformation that few are willing to grant.

"My hair is falling out," the atheist neighbour said to me. "Can you heal me?"



"You will be healed if you go to Mass for a week," I said, knowing her discomfort.

"I'm not religious!" she replied.

I wanted to tell her that precisely for that reason she should do it, but then the neighbour asked me whether I was single. I said yes,

and he asked whether I would not like to marry one of the beautiful single ladies around me.

I knew he wanted to make me look like a Tartuffe, but faithful to my principles, I told him the truth.

“If one of them takes an interest in me, I might consider it.”

His triumphant smile indicated that this was the proof with which he would construct all kinds of slanders after my departure.

Then Elisa told me that the next day they would go to see a Chinese master who also healed by laying on his hands, a technique called reiki, simply to make sure her mother would be healed for life. I knew she said it in order to relativise my achievement, and to see whether it would offend me.

I told her that if Christ had healed her there was no need for it, but she insisted.

Then I realised she was only trying to undo any debt towards me.

Reiki could present itself as an energy technique; it could even produce relief; it could be part of a broad spiritual market. Even so, the spirit recognises the source of the healing that transforms. Technique relieves. Truth converts. The body responds to stimuli. The soul responds to rectitude. Elisa sought certainty through accumulation: she added methods to avoid an inner surrender.

Laura, by contrast, embodied a different faith: she did not add, she surrendered. The faith that surrenders does not need to neutralise debts; it gives thanks and lets goodness change it.

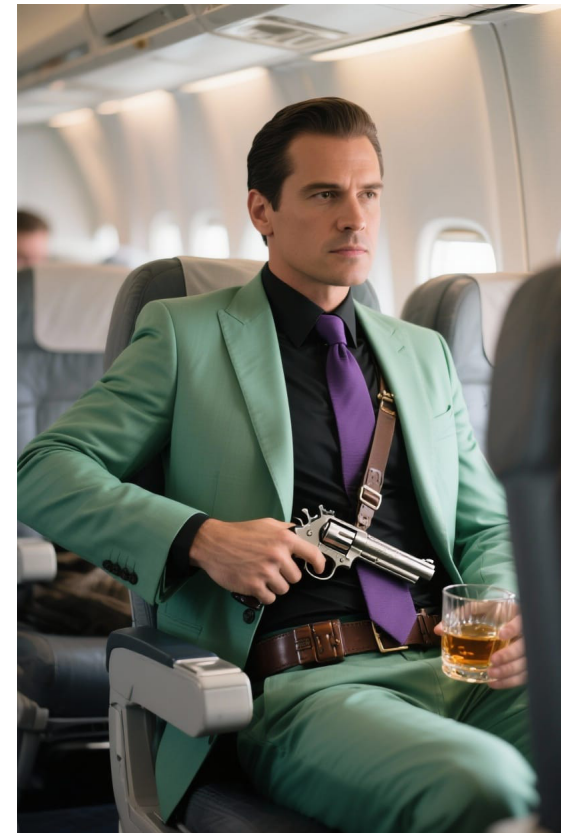
Back at my hotel I felt nauseous. Was it so perverse to help the sick in our generation? That healing had, in fact, brought me more problems than blessings. Goodness produces resistance when it breaks the moral accounting of an age. In a culture that administers everything in terms of exchange, the miracle appears as an intrusion. The pure heart becomes uncomfortable because it exposes the difference between gift and commerce.

The assassin who fell limp

On returning home I received three thousand dollars in compensation for a failed attempt on my life that occurred on board a plane during my return from India. I cannot reveal names or verifiable details, since the conflict was closed by a confidentiality

agreement; nonetheless, I can narrate the circumstances in an equivalent setting, faithful to what occurred in its substance.

I was returning from India to North America following a long and fragmented itinerary, with several stopovers that seemed to prolong the transit unnecessarily: first Europe, connecting in Atlanta,



then Buffalo, then Ottawa, and finally Montreal. On one of those legs, already inside the aircraft and before take-off, I noticed a disturbing anomaly. A few rows from my seat there was a group of bodyguards in impeccable pastel suits, with golden ties and dark shirts, armed to the teeth; they were drinking alcohol with a disordered

avidity, at times celebrating some suspicious operation, at times drowning fears that overwhelmed them. They seemed seized by unease.

I was sitting reading a play by Enrique Jardiel Poncela when one of those men began to fix his attention on me. He pretended it was casual, with accidental exchanges of glances, but there was intention in that insistence. I wondered whether that mercenary had been pushed towards me to attack me because of the paranormal events I had lived through in Chennai, such as the ladder of clouds that

descended to my window, or the cyclone I diverted by getting out of a rickshaw and raising my hand as Moses had done before the Red Sea when pursued by Pharaoh's hosts. I sat and focused on the comedy I would never finish when I heard footsteps behind me.

The assassin had suddenly stood up, placing his hand on his weapon and advancing down the aisle, but just as he reached me and I felt his shadow at my side, I saw him lift his face as though his body were rebelling against his will: the alcohol he had swallowed surged and he vomited suddenly and violently over me, soaking my clothes, my hands, and the pages of the book I had open. He literally bathed me in vomit. The woman sitting beside me screamed in horror, while I stood up slowly and stared at him. He smiled, mocking, expecting me to react with anger, but I, with the same serenity with which Christ replied to the one who struck him before Caiaphas, confronted him with saddened eyes:

"Why did you do it?" I asked in a tone that completed the sentence:

"...if I have done you no harm."

At that instant something happened that years later I would read about in the revelations of Anne Catherine Emmerich concerning Christ's arrest on the Mount of Olives:

His body, which seemed to be preparing to attack me, did not respond and the assassin collapsed unconscious to the floor, his tongue out in a rictus of horror on the aircraft carpet, as though energy had abandoned him all at once, his hand stroking the weapon he carried, without having co-ordinated the strength to draw it.

His companions were petrified for a second and then reacted, lifting him between them and taking him towards the rear of the plane, while a murmur ran through the cabin. I remained covered in vomit and the woman beside me shouted at me to go away, as if I were the threat.

I then called the cabin crew and asked how it was possible they had allowed a drunk and armed man to fly in such conditions. They tried to compensate the situation by offering to move me to first class, but first I had to go to the aircraft lavatory, where I wiped myself with paper towels, folded the soaked shirt and put it in my hand luggage, remaining only in my undershirt; I sprayed on some perfume clumsily, though the smell lingered, and throughout the whole journey people avoided me with visible disgust.

Thus I arrived in Atlanta, where the episode did not close but extended into new trials. My sister was waiting for me with her children and, seeing me in that state, reacted with panic, talking about contagion and dangers, to the point that after hosting me for one day—during which I bought groceries for her family for five hundred dollars—she threw me out of her house and abandoned me on a road, without my knowing that county. By one of those coincidences that can only be called providential, I managed to contact a cousin who lived there; she picked me up and took me to a hotel, warning me in passing that in certain areas of Atlanta a Latino walking alone along empty roads may be detained or even shot by the police, so that expulsion had put my life at risk.

I recovered my luggage and decided to continue the journey without delay. I took a flight to Buffalo, paid out of my own pocket, spent the night there enduring the cold, and the next day travelled by coach for ten hours to Ottawa, where I was received generously by a friend, the son of Colombia's ambassador. I stayed there for about twenty days, grateful but aware that I must not abuse that hospitality, and finally set off for Montreal, moved by the inner call that drove me to know monastic life, for in the United States they had offered to receive me in a Benedictine monastery to discern my ascetic vocation.

It was in Montreal that the episode found its administrative closure. I submitted formal letters of complaint against the airline, pointing out the gravity of having allowed an armed man in a state of intoxication to travel without control, and the company opted for financial compensation in exchange for maintaining the anonymity of the bodyguard and of the airline itself. They offered me three thousand dollars, which I accepted under those conditions and which, faithful to the spirit of Jesus Christ, I shared that day with the only human being who had shown kindness to me after the aforementioned healing.

So I invited Laura, who had told me that her dream was to go and see Cirque du Soleil.

"I feel like a fifteen-year-old girl," she told me, "being courted by a Hindu prince."

We saw the show and then had dinner in one of the best restaurants in the city.

“You are beautiful, Laura,” I told her, “and I say it because of your soul. Thank you for your company.”

She opened her blouse and showed me a scar between her withered breasts.

“I should have died five years ago, when I had a heart attack,” she told me, “but the Lord allowed me to live.”

Laura thus gave thanks with tenderness for that wonderful day we spent together. Her childlike joy at the spectacle was, certainly, a gift from God.

On our way out we ate in one of the best restaurants in Montreal.

She gave me her phone number, but I lost it.

Intrigue in the Monastery

Back at my hotel I received a message from the largest monastery in the United States, that of Saint Vincent near Pittsburgh, to take me in as a monk. They sent me an invitation to be with them for twelve days. I wanted to renounce the world out of a thirst for purity, but also in order to write freely. Leaving the torrent of the secular world was my response to the growing contempt for my healings: silence and retreat would facilitate my writing, which, as I have already mentioned, was the most sacred mission God had entrusted to me.

Nevertheless, I could not help being surprised that they accepted as a candidate a man who, although he lived alone, had not yet divorced his first wife, and who moreover lacked American citizenship.

I conjectured—rightly—that my comments about my anointing as Judge of the Living and the Dead in Chennai were already *vox populi* among Hindu and American priests.

I arrived at Saint Vincent Archabbey with the inner disposition of one who seeks silence, order, and discernment within the Benedictine community, one of the most influential and ancient in the United States. From the very first moment I became aware of the material and symbolic magnitude of the place: an extensive abbey, solidly sustained by private donations, with close ties to economic and political elites, whose prosperity contrasted with the idealised image of monastic life I carried in my mind.

As soon as I announced my arrival, they made an observation which, though practical, proved decisive: I had to dress in black. That instruction accompanied me on the journey. I was travelling by coach, passed through Philadelphia, and stayed a few days visiting friends. It was then, as the season’s cold began to be felt, that I went into a clothing shop and saw a black hoodie. I bought it without much reflection, along with black trousers. When I dressed that way, I realised I was practically dressed like a monk. It seemed to me



appropriate attire for a candidate, coherent with the spirit of the place. On arriving at the abbey, in fact, I was easily mistaken for the monks who moved in silence through the corridors.

I also carried a rosary I had bought in Chennai, at the exit of Saint Thomas Cathedral. It had attracted me by its form and sobriety, though at the time I was completely unaware of the specific meaning of the cross that distinguished it. I put it on naturally, with no intention of provoking anything. Yet on arriving, I immediately noticed the looks: wide, arrested eyes that rested again and again on the rosary with an unease hard to disguise.

Perhaps that same night, or the next day, the person who had invited me asked me directly why I had brought that rosary. I replied honestly: because I had bought it in India, because I liked it, because I did not know its particular meaning. My explanation did not seem to convince him. He told me then that it was the rosary of the Franciscans and that, as I ought to know—something I truly did not—Francis of Assisi had rebelled against the Benedictines by accusing them of living in luxury. He preached asceticism and radical poverty, whereas, according to my interlocutor, the Benedictine community had accepted the accumulation of goods as part of its history and structure. He pointed out, almost crudely, that all those great properties and buildings belonged to the community, and that each of the five hundred monks who lived there even had a new car. In that context, wearing a Franciscan symbol was, for them, little short of a declaration of war. I tried to explain that there had been no such intention, but I had the impression he did not believe me.

Even so, during those nights manifestations began to occur that I can only describe as spiritual, even angelic. After about three days I heard clearly a phrase that surprised me with its harsh and angry tone:

“If he had at least had the decency to cut his hair!”

Only then did I look at myself in the mirror—something I rarely do with attention, since I do not usually pay much attention to my personal appearance. I noticed that, indeed, my hair was a bit long; not excessively, but certainly far from a military or elegant cut.

The next day I went to the abbey’s administrator and told him I wanted to have my hair cut. He responded naturally, as though everything had already been foreseen, and led me to a lady who turned out to be the abbot’s sister-in-law. That abbot, I later learned, was a peculiar figure. I had been warned that I had to go through

three interviews to assess my possible admission to the community and that, when it came time to speak with him, he had the habit of falling asleep while one spoke. The anecdote struck me as curious, almost unbelievable, but it happened exactly so: during the interview, he fell asleep. My reaction was simple; I kept silent and waited for him to wake up. Still, I could not avoid the feeling that all of it had something of comedy to it, as though it were a covert test to observe my reaction, my patience, my inner disposition.

I had also been told that the abbot tended to probe insistently into candidates’ relationship with their parents. When he asked me, I replied that it was good. However, watching his face, I had the clear impression that he possessed different information, as though he knew it was not as harmonious as I claimed. In reality, I have always believed it has been good, and generally it has been; though it is true that those who read some of my novels, where I emphasize generational conflicts, might conclude otherwise.

All of this shaped in me an uneasy sensation: that I was being observed, even watched. At certain moments the abbey seemed to empty out completely and, when I tried to approach the young men with whom I hoped to speak, they made excuses or hurried away. It gave the impression that they had been instructed to keep their distance. During those days I experienced a real, palpable solitude. Solitude is not foreign to me; on the contrary, I used it to read. Yet I began to perceive such negative energy that it saddened me deeply. I felt the presence of hostile affects directed at me, a kind of silent fury, even spiritual jealousy, linked precisely to the mystical experiences I relate here.

That climate contrasted with the almost perfect regularity of liturgical life. The monks gathered punctually to sing five times a day; it was comforting to see those empty fields fill with habits fifteen minutes before prayers and chants. Communal meals were sumptuous, with fruit and drinks generously laid out in the halls. Choral prayer revealed itself as the axis of the day. I integrated naturally, for music has been for me a form of direct prayer. My voice joined the choir without difficulty, and that participation allowed me to observe attentively the inner rhythms of the monks’ souls: I distinguished there everything from the vanity of those who knew themselves owners of beautiful voices to lustful and even violent

impulses. I was living, in more than one sense, *Il nome della rosa* by Umberto Eco.

I noted, moreover, that many of the abbey's directives were in the hands of psychologists or psychiatrists with doctorates, who often referred with scorn to the Church's most elementary traditions, in particular sexual abstinence.

"The only thing we do not tolerate is paedophiles," one of them told me, noticing my resistance to confessing my sexual preferences.

Many monks carried out external functions: confessors to influential people, spiritual advisers to figures linked to great fortunes, habitual interlocutors of those who wield economic and political power. That function set the tone of the place. The abbey radiated order, solvency, and a certain ceremonial distance from the common world. The high-end cars, the steady flow of resources, the costly tuition fees of their students and the diversity of origins reflected a wealthy community, not without vanity, as the monk who had invited me used to stress with almost childish pride.

In that context I began to formulate—by the light of texts on the history of the Church that I found in its library—my thesis concerning the subterranean persistence of the Arian heresy in contemporary Christianity. When I set it out to the second man in power in the monastery—a young psychiatrist of barely thirty—his eyes widened. His surprise came less from my audacity than from realising the breadth of my encyclopaedic knowledge of Church history. And yet something in his gestures and silences indicated to me that my thesis precisely described the current crisis of Christianity. His astonishment was sealed in an eloquent muteness, intensified by the fact that he had lost the game of chess we had begun at the start of the interview: he saw clearly that all his objections and counterarguments would be rebutted, and he could only admit, in that recognition, the presence of the Holy Spirit.

In those days, just after stating my bold thesis, a singular event occurred: the visit of the papal nuncio to the United States, one of the figures of greatest authority within the Catholic Church. His arrival was solemn. A limousine entered the grounds, and expectation became palpable. It was striking that at the moment of his arrival only eleven monks, the abbot and I were present. Although the community counts hundreds of members, that day the encounter was reduced to a minimal circle.

The nuncio did not address us directly. He watched, he spoke with the abbot, and his presence generated an intense vibration in the atmosphere. The monks present showed deep emotion, almost reverential: they knew that such an event had no precedent in the abbey's history.

That day I wore white. As I entered the small chapel I perceived the image clearly: all the monks were dressed in black; I was the only one in white. The scene evoked, with an impossible-to-ignore symbolic force, the figure of Christ surrounded by the twelve apostles. It was impossible that I could have planned my clothing that day, for no one knew the nuncio would come; that coincidence—which resembled the visit of my university's owner in India, when I too was dressed in white—acquired spiritual density at the very moment it occurred.

During my stay I retain in memory a luminous, almost festive scene: an afternoon on 4 July, Independence Day in the United States, when I took part in a volleyball match. I joined one of the teams and, with an unexpected streak, scored fourteen consecutive points thanks to my serves. Everything indicated we would win; however, faithful to a compassion I have always felt for my rivals, the impulse dissipated and we ended up losing 16–14. That simple, human afternoon contrasted with the spiritual density of many other moments lived in the abbey.

Over the course of the days I shared with the monks fundamental ethical criteria. I expressed serenely that my conscience aligned neither with positions in favour of abortion nor with the death penalty. That coherence, alien to the usual polarisation, seemed to surprise them. A significant conversation also arose when they spoke to me of a monk who heard the confessions of people directly connected to the Iraq war. I commented that experiences of that kind must leave deep traces, both psychic and spiritual. The observation produced first surprise and then a silent assent.

I also related my experiences in India to several superiors. Two of them listened with genuine attention and inner openness; the third, by contrast, reacted with an evident, almost defensive distance.

One of the most intense moments occurred during a liturgical chant. While we were singing the psalms, I experienced a sudden inner perception, like a direct illumination of the Spirit. I turned and, at the other end of the choir, some twenty metres away, I met the

abbot's gaze. His face was crossed by an anger so intense it distorted him, as though he were confronting something he could neither understand nor integrate. When he realised I had discovered him, he immediately turned his face away, almost in fear, as if it troubled him that, among a hundred monks, my gaze had fallen on him precisely in the instant when he expressed the most hatred.

That spiritual conflict seemed to derive from what I already embodied: through my account, my experience, and my way of understanding faith, I overflowed the known and acceptable frames for him.

Among the monks there was an elderly man who listened with particular attention to my accounts of the miracles of Montreal. His faith was simple, direct. He asked me to pray for his healing, and I performed a blessing in secret, with recollection and trust. Some time later, already in Bucaramanga, I mentioned that episode to a seer with whom I used to speak about spiritual experiences. She told me that the monk had been healed: his illness, a cancer, had disappeared.

Before leaving I gave my host—the man in charge of incorporating new monks—a small vial of holy water that I myself had consecrated. I explained that this water was meant to accompany them in times of illness that would come. The monk received it as he drove me to the airport with a mixture of bewilderment and discomfort, though he did not dare to refuse it.

My departure from the abbey occurred after eleven days of living together. When I took leave, the monks told me that I was “too holy” for their premises and that I should apply with the Cistercian monks. Their conclusion rested, among other things, on my refusal to go hunting with them: first, out of respect for animals, and second, because I enjoy reading more than certain forms of group camaraderie.

Years later, during the pandemic, that holy water was remembered and used within the community. The infinite blessings God granted me would also preserve them during the health crisis in which Death carried off so many souls in Pennsylvania.

18. The Prophet Who Put an End to Climate Change



To be a prophet of God was never an easy calling; besides arousing the rancour of agnostics and atheists, the anointed one must endure the slights of his own church, inevitably conditioned by the lives of its saints and martyrs. The apparitions of Mother Mary to virgins and children over the last two centuries have accustomed the twenty-first-century believer to think that God rarely manifests Himself to scholars or poets, and that He prefers the candid—ignorant of the world's artifices—or the innocent.

As I have already recounted, God revealed to me that I am the incarnation of the apostle Peter, sent at the end of times in the certainty that I would not deny Him a fourth time. Some tell me that my belief is personal, and I reply that nothing could be more certain.

—My faith is very simple: I believe in every one of the noble precepts narrated in the Bible, and I see, like William Blake, the intervention of God in the fall of a leaf.

My mystical experiences would go unnoticed, like those of so many saints, if it were not for the demands that the Lord—or, as the Arians would tell me, my 'personal beliefs'—has made of me to make them known "so that they know we exist".

Among all His blessings, the Lord granted me—and I blush to write it—the gift of being heard by the earth and its elements.

In 2022 I travelled to Catalonia, Spain, and shared in the anguish of its inhabitants over the prolonged droughts.

—I shall pray for rain, I said to a friend, who smiled mockingly.

The next day rain covered the fields.

—It's only one shower, he told me, adding that he did not believe in God.

That episode caused irritation, for little by little my friend fell prey to an animosity that would overflow when, contrary to his original invitation that I should live in Spain for several months, he asked me to seek new horizons after barely two weeks' stay.

A trip to France and my return to Colombia distracted me.

The rains of May 2023

It was in May 2023 that I read an article on social media by a public official from Manresa, whom I shall call Luis Goriola, as he has asked me not to disclose his name. The promise made by the director of a theatre in Manresa to allow me to stage and perform one of my plays there kept me spiritually connected to the city. By divine inspiration I offered him the consolation that science could not then provide.

"Hello, I'm Hugo, the man of fair weather; wherever I go, I bring prosperity and rain; the cause is spiritual and the world does not understand it (...) In fact, I had a vision that I was returning to

Barcelona bringing rain to Spain; time will tell. Kind regards from Colombia."

"If you come with rain we'll make you mayor of the city for climatic merit. We'll refurbish the Kursaal and make Manresa the cultural capital of Europe."

"I'll speak with heaven so that it pours for a few days. In fact, I have a student in Madrid to whom I said that a week ago, and you see how the water has returned."

"I'm very grateful that you are sensitive to the serious problem we have—us and much of the Mediterranean. Climate change condemns us to a drought that cannot be solved with a week of rain. Experts estimate that we would need a whole month of intense rainfall to reach normal levels of water reserves. Let's hope your rains at least give us breathing space to arm ourselves with solutions. A very big hug, and thank you."

"I was going to reply, but the answer became so laborious that I wrote an article on the subject: *The Causes of Climate Change Are Spiritual*."

That article would eventually become part of my theological treatise *You Are God*, published recently, also by divine will. I mention the will of the Creator to illuminate the scepticism of certain local writers who ask me how it is possible that I write so many books without being a "best-selling" author.

"Because God has asked it of me," is my reply. Fortunate is the one who writes for a captive readership; but to recognise oneself as blessed as a writer—oh marvel! —is a privilege known only to those who dissolve the borders between life and death: the poet of the Pentateuch, Homer, Dante, Beckett...

That conversation of May 2023 culminated in a presentation about my epiphany:

"I've been saying it to nations for years, and they respond with scepticism. They have seen wonders such as the end of the earthquakes in 2012 in India, but in the end, everything can be reduced to coincidences. I might be like Pirandello's character who offered himself to be hired for his good fortune."

Luis Goriola showed no particular interest then. I presumed that prevailing scepticism persuaded him he had met yet another Quixote. The rains ceased, and I forgot about Catalonia and Luis Goriola.

The rains of March 2024

Nine months later, on 9 February 2024, I read alarming news in the press about the drought that was battering Spain. The Lord reminded me of the immense gifts He had bestowed upon me, and I wrote to Luis Goriola again, full of faith:

“I am going to pray for rain in Manresa and Catalonia, and for the reservoirs to recover their level before March.”

This time Luis Goriola replied at once.

“We’ll need your prayers. Thank you, Hugo!”

“I trust in God.”

“The problem lies with men.”

“Indeed; but those of us who renounce the evil that money, fame and power provoke become, without realising it, their



representatives—simply because we desire only the good.”

Luis Goriola did not reply to so severe a message. Who in today’s world rejects the temptations of fame, money and power? I have done so, but the social penalty is invariably contempt.

Then I spoke with God every day—that is, I prayed. February passed, and the drought continued in Catalonia.

“O Lord! It was You who asked me to write to Catalonia,” I cried.

“Why do you doubt? Did you not write that you would pray for it to cease before March?”

The next day rain fell over Catalonia and Spain. Then I wrote to Luis Goriola with the certainty that God had heard me. This time

Luis Goriola replied to all my messages, though with the same condescension with which the dukes replied to Don Quixote and Sancho Panza:

“God has heard my plea and the rains will gladden Catalonia. Then you will spread the good news.”

“Thank you, Hugo, for your prayers. To mitigate the effect of three years of drought we would need no less than 500 litres of rain this month. In Catalan forests, eight out of ten trees are already in the process of dying from lack of water.”

It did rain, yes—though not with the magnitude required to reverse Catalonia’s water deficit immediately. Today, December 2025, I read that the level of the reservoirs in Catalonia’s internal basins stands at 70,37 %.⁶

“They are coming, Luis Goriola. For faith to move mountains, someone with faith is required. When they arrive, I will tell you the reasons.”

It was 6 March; on the 10th all Spain celebrated the return of the rains: I expounded at length on the spiritual causes of my conversations with God.

“The reason for the rains that will astonish the world today, dear Luis Goriola, lies in my books of mystical poems (*King of Kings* and *Hymns to Jesus*), in which it was revealed to me that I was once an apostle of Christ, and that Spain and Portugal are also my nations. How I would love to stage my plays in some theatre in Barcelona!”

“Thank you, Hugo, for your concern and your mystical dedication to the problems we face with the climate crisis. I am an atheist. I don’t believe in God. But I work very actively to tackle these very complex problems ‘from the ground up’. So everything helps! Delighted to share challenges with you!”

“What matters is that we believe in ourselves, Luis Goriola, for it is from there that all divinity emanates—even non-divinity or atheism, which ends up being a firmly held belief. I believe in myself and in the power of my good intentions, which accord with those of Jesus of the Gospels. That is why I wrote to you: I went to Manresa for a month and knew its peaceful life, but I was offered a job in Paris;

⁶ Source: *Agència Catalana de l’Aigua*, “Estat de les reserves d’aigua als embassaments,” available at: https://aca.gencat.cat/es/laigua/estat-del-medi-hidric/recursos-disponibles/estat-de-les-reserves-daigua-als-embassaments/?utm_source=chatgpt.com

I travelled, I was rejected for my physical appearance and had to return to Colombia; then El Niño was striking Colombia and I prayed to avert it, which unleashed a spiritual struggle I shall write about later; in it I saw many visions, including that of travelling to live in Catalonia. So I wrote to you. El Niño had serious ups and downs, and a volcano at Ruiz threatened to erupt. The drought never arrived and the volcano calmed. At last, fifteen days ago, I decided to leave the Andes—my native land—for no prophet is honoured in his own country, and to move to Colombia's coast, where I now live. Learning of your drought, I have renewed my dialogues with God (there is a bestseller that claims anyone can do it, and it is true, for God is, even for psychology, the inner voice of the Supreme Good), and He has promised to calm it. I say to Him: 'And if Luis Goriola also fails to keep his promise?', and He, as always, tells me that that is not my concern but His. What matters, after all, is to give without expecting reward in return, for the universe (that is, God) gives in the same way. And you, Luis Goriola—do you believe in yourself and in what you write?"

"Dear Hugo. I reiterate my gratitude for your concern about our drought, which unfortunately continues and will continue to be the norm of our climate, as a 'gift' of the excesses that, since the Industrial Revolution, have characterised our Western culture. I hope your stay in Manresa achieved its objectives. We are very mystical in these lands! We have the Black Madonna of Montserrat, the cave of Saint Ignatius... and countless curious miracles that make this land special. You can rest assured about my integrity. I keep my promises. I am someone who works for the global good and I surround myself with people who do the same, to gather sufficient strength and be transformative. I devote myself to it every day of my life, both personally and professionally. I would not dare to say that I 'believe' in myself, as you ask, because 'believing' is an act of faith, and I am not a man of faith. I trust myself! And I trust the people I work with and grow alongside. And they will always have me at their side just as I have them at mine. And naturally I write what I want to see realised, with a clear objective of impact, so that my children—our children—can develop and live in an environment not as hostile as the one now before us. So: I trust myself, my environment, its potential, and the projects I take on or am brought into. What I write is a consequence. We'll stay in touch, Hugo! A big hug."

"Believe me, Luis Goriola, I see my life as incredible as Moses's or Swedenborg's could have been. Last night the Lord told me I must move; Japan, Saudi Arabia, or Spain are the nations that call to me spiritually."

"Dear Hugo. I dedicate myself to research and innovation at university level. In Central Catalonia I coordinate a programme that brings universities, research centres, technology centres, companies, local public administrations and citizens to work together to address complex challenges—such as the climate crisis, population ageing, social inequalities, the energy transition, and so on. And all of that without any miracle—only through the intervention of the effort of many people and institutions who unite to face a challenge. Those are shared agendas. Unfortunately, I have no contact in any theatre, nor can I influence the purchase of any book by any public library. I'm sorry. I can help researchers from all over the world collaborate with the processes initiated by the programme. I have already involved people from Australia, Chile, Taiwan, Colombia and, of course, the vast majority of Europe. You know that in Catalonia we have—and continue to have—a very serious drought problem, and your prayers will not be enough to solve it, because it is a global issue, not a local one. We will have to practise climate resilience and adapt to the new conditions, because we have reduced the rainfall regime by more than half in three years, and that has not been solved by the few drops that have fallen recently. The reservoirs have not risen even three per cent; they are around ten per cent of capacity. We will solve this by thinking about how we can adapt our forests to the new situation, how we can make water distribution more efficient, how we can create a resilient culture among citizens—processes that require less water—and adapt to the new landscapes already taking hold in our lands, such as savannah, or sea-level rise destroying our coasts, or extreme temperatures. Barcelona, by 2050, will have Seville's temperatures, and its rainfall. And that will not change (unfortunately), because we would need to halt the tonnes and tonnes of CO₂ that human beings spew into the atmosphere day after day in the name of 'progress'. Your prayers should not be only for Catalonia, or Saudi Arabia, or wherever you wish to go. Your prayers should be global. It will be of no use for Catalonia to have rain if the rest of Europe burns in heat or Greece goes up in flames. It will be of no use for Catalonia to have the privilege of water if India drowns in floods—which is what will

I, Petrus Romanus_____

happen. Pray for the whole world, you who have faith. A very big hug.”



Luis Goriola’s reply submerged the rains granted by the Creator within that sea of scepticism that is the global climate crisis. I decided to interrupt our exchange. How many miracles the Lord has worked in those I have met throughout my life! How much silence and contempt they have brought me! Once, to intercede for a healing or for rain was a miracle the multitude respected; today it is merely a source of pity and rancour.

The Prophet of Rain Is Not Heard in Colombia

Drought had also struck Colombia for several months. Throughout 2023 the El Niño phenomenon was announced by the Presidency as a tragedy, and the magazine *Semana* forecast energy rationing. Then I wrote on X to Vicky Dávila that it would not be so—that I had already contained the fury of the Nevado del Ruiz and

_____Hugo Noël Santander Ferreira

that I would ask God that El Niño would not reach Colombia. And although rains fell throughout 2023, neither Vicky nor government entities so much as commented on my posts. But at the end of 2023, God told me in dreams that drought would fall upon Colombia not only for having ignored my messages, but also because I had been attacked by Bucaramanga high society and by local writers enraged by my denunciations of the abuses of Gustavo Petro’s socialism. And at the end of 2023 the drought produced several fires in Colombia. “Leave your homeland, for there no one is a prophet!” the Lord commanded, and in March 2024 we had moved to Sincelejo. On arriving, the dry fields of the Sabana moved me. “Bring the rain here too, O God!” I cried to the Holy Trinity. At night I saw heavy clouds following behind me as if they were my pets. Then the Holy Spirit dictated a poem to me:

You Will Be Known by the Rain

*I crossed the Atlantic in search of sanity,
leaving behind fury and inclemency;
to Mexico I arrived—torture for journalists—
when their silenced voice cried out for mercy.*

*Bogotá saw me fight against assassins,
I unmasked socialist fascism,
a decade before its rise
I granted it a year to renew Colombia.*

*In Bucaramanga, I subdued El Niño,
with penitence, even while persecuted,
I fought drought, I implored the rain,
I grew drunk on such indifference.*

*Catalonia saw me plead for water,
amid its arid and sorrowful agony;
I announced it would cease before March,
as in London they take me for mere coincidence.*

In Greece, amid ashes and desolation,

*I, Petrus Romanus*_____

*the fires fell silent through my mediation.
And now in the Sucrean savannah I dwell,
announcing heaven's blessing upon it.*

*God granted me the gift of being His prophet
not in name, but by ending all affliction.
Write it down! Let them know you by my works!
Me, who laboured in seventy books my labours!*

*May it be Your gentle will, Lord,
that I—filmmaker, actor and poet,
philosopher and teacher, traveller and man of the theatre—
be known not for the immense work
Your love inspires in me,
but for that more ancient wonder:
to announce Your rain.*

Then, without further hesitation, I proclaimed the imminent end of the drought in Catalonia and Spain, and almost simultaneously in Colombia's Sucrean savannah:

"Dear Luis Goriola. I understand that the modern approach often leads us away from spiritual considerations, prioritising the agenda of progress that you are trying to redirect. However, in the United States the paranormal is recognised as an integral part of existence and its capacity to offer solutions is assessed. I refer specifically to the paranormal—a term I will use from now on because it suits your working framework. Pragmatism is also part of science and is based on observing results, regardless of their causes. If my presence, or what you call 'my prayers', contributes in any way to climate change, this should be considered. You mention collaboration between institutions, and it would be equally feasible to collaborate with a theatre or a network of libraries alongside an MFA programme at Temple University. If you looked at my books, you would see that this case is not unique: wherever I go, I bring rain and prosperity. I mentioned some situations, but the most striking was the cessation of earthquakes in 2012, which until 12 April had been battering the world. You can buy and read my book *Hymns to Jesus* on Amazon, or access it free of charge in the Internet Library or Inkitt. The story is complex, because social and technological inequalities

_____ *Hugo Noël Santander Ferreira*

throughout the world, together with institutionalised injustice, conspiracy and lies, are the true causes of climate change. Between 2012 and 2019 I interceded for the world, but when I was persecuted for my ideas to the point of losing my job, the Lord told me that I could no longer intervene and He unleashed the pandemic. His fury ceased as soon as I was given not one, but two jobs (one from the Vatican and one from the private sector). I recount all of this in my novel *Petrus Romanus*. Do not think my presence in the world goes unnoticed by the established powers. Those who have attacked me also suffer the consequences of destiny—something I do not seek; it simply happens. However, it is not my intention to convince you of what you are already witnessing. I told you the drought would end in March, and so it has. If you prefer not to accept the facts or to regard them as mere coincidences, it is your conscience—or the education with which you identify—that leads you to that conclusion. You may continue reinforcing the idea that fossil residues and CO₂ are responsible for droughts in Catalonia, or accept a paranormal solution for their imminent recurrence. I arrived in Sincelejo, Sucre, a land that also suffers drought; yesterday I announced rain, and at night it rained. Last night the Lord told me I would be known for such intercessions. I simply follow His designs since the afternoon of 1 June 2011, when, in Chennai, India, heaven opened with doves at my window and He anointed me as His Prophet. The Indians saw the wonder, but that is another story, which I also recount in my novel. Kind regards. Hugo Noël."

"Dear Hugo. Many thanks for your extensive reply. As always, I thank you very much for your dedication and sensitivity to the problems of the world and, specifically, to the problems of Catalonia. Thank you! Do not be confused by my condition as a scientist, because I have a very developed spiritual side, even if I lack faith in a supreme being (the idea of God). By that I mean that I contemplate other kinds of knowledge beyond the scientific, which I consider very useful, but not the only knowledge human beings possess as tools for development and evolution. I should add that science is NOT based solely on observing results. The scientific method is far more than 'observing' experiments; and naturally, its process is not independent of causes. And here we have a stumbling block, because complex problems like the climate crisis do not have

a single cause... they have many, and different ones. We do not know the vast majority of them, and that is why the problem surpasses our methodologies—paranormal ones included—for addressing such complexity. That is why I have always thanked you, and will continue to thank you, for your dedication to the problems of Catalonia,



because I consider it surely contributes. Do not doubt it. But even as I say this, I am convinced that your actions alone will not solve the climate crisis. They must be complemented by many other actions undertaken by many other actors. Complex problems have complex, intricate, systemic solutions... and they require many additive contributions. I am sorry to tell you that the drought did not end in March. Not at all. In Catalonia, the recent rains have not mitigated the drought. They have contributed to raising the reservoirs of the internal basins by five per cent, which were at the paltry ten per cent. The fifty litres that have fallen on average are a long way from the

five hundred I told you Catalonia needs this month to be able to 'breathe' a little and 'mitigate' the drought for the moment. The situation is very critical: temperatures keep rising; the little snow in the Pyrenees is already melting (it shouldn't); Saharan winds are bringing too many suspended particles; the Mediterranean level keeps rising; and our groundwater reserves remain non-existent in many counties. Here is the historical summary:

And what I was telling you... this is what is happening in Catalonia... but there are entire countries disappearing under the sea, forests turning into savannah, salinisation or disappearance of great lakes, polar melting, disappearance of glaciers (in Catalonia they no longer exist), annihilation of biodiversity (as never before), and serious alteration of biogeochemical cycles, such as the Atlantic currents. Everything is connected! And it will be of no use to solve something locally if globally we continue advancing towards climatic chaos. This is the reality we live in, which requires a GLOBAL, not LOCAL approach to the extremely serious problem we have on top of us. And it is not only fossil fuels that are responsible, of course. We need the whole world to unite to address the grave situation, not only in Catalonia. I hope your actions and paranormal activities move in this direction and contribute to a holistic conception of the serious problem we are suffering. I will look for your novel and read it. Thank you for your sensitivity. We'll stay in touch and we keep fighting to make this world better. A very big hug!"

"Dear Luis Goriola, I told you I would pray so that in March there would be a solution, and it is already happening. Abandon that pessimism which Jesus called lack of faith. I gave you my testimony, and it is God who will teach you its validity. How many passages about saints there are in which they gave their word and God never failed them! I do not say I am a saint, but a sinner—with a yearning for holiness. The end of the drought in Catalonia will perplex scientists no less than the end of the earthquakes silenced seismologists in 2012. My testimony was involved, but it is a testimony inspired by God. God needs believers as much as believers need God, says Eckhart. His ways are inscrutable. Instead of announcing cataclysms, He wants us to give the good news of His blessings. It is Spain that is blessed, for love of Saint Peter and Saint Paul!"

“Dear Hugo. Apologies for the delay in my reply. I have been devoted to my family during these days of Holy Week break. I hope you enjoyed these days very much. Apologies too if I seem pessimistic... but after three intense years of drought, I think the evidence of reality makes us move beyond past times to be resilient and adapt to what now lies ahead—namely, that only half the water we were accustomed to is falling from the sky. And we have to adapt to it! (there is no other way) and hope it does not reduce further. I’m sharing some data after the three days of rain we enjoyed—very much—last week. In Manresa, which depends on the internal basins that supply Barcelona’s reservoirs, we have reached 11.68% of reservoir capacity as of today. And that is very little... but a month ago we were below ten per cent. For reference, the ‘normal’ average (as marked by the last ten years) should be 70.91% (seven times what we have now). As you can see, the situation is very critical, because we will have to face the summer with values surely below ten per cent, and with a terrifying risk of forest fires. That is why I told you we needed five hundred and fifty have fallen. Welcome though they are! Moreover, to add further gravity, the last days of maritime storm have destroyed the Catalan coast, especially around Barcelona and the northern coast, leaving many towns without sand, uprooting trees, destroying infrastructure and causing substantial and costly damage to promenades and towns. We live in climatically complex, very delicate times. We must join forces to adapt our customs to the new reality. We will have to change the way we cultivate, manage forests, relate to the sea and rivers, and so on—policies we must encourage, such as the construction of desalination plants, resilient irrigation and more efficient aquifer channelling, controlling nitrate pollution and many other headaches that emerge as challenges we must overcome. I will keep informing you of everything that happens. Many thanks for your concern and sensitivity. It is very much appreciated. A very big hug.”

“Hello Luis Goriola. I will answer you with the play we stage in Manresa. But it is better to tell you the full story. For now I copy my text from my Facebook wall:

‘A month after arriving in Sincelejo, the drought that had been striking the Sucrean savannah for a year came to an end. I also announced the end of drought in Spain to the meteorological authorities—solely through my dialogues with God. The drought

ended throughout Spain, except in Catalonia, a region the Lord kept in suspense until I published on my blog what I write here. As with El Niño, the Nevado del Ruiz and the tremors of Bucaramanga, in Colombia no one sees anything but causality between my mediations and the rains. It is understandable that no one believes in anointed Prophets any longer, and that those who benefit are like the lepers who say to themselves: “Why should we thank him if God placed him in our path to heal us?” But in a city in Spain, a nation God chose to bring about my return (that of the Lord in me), this week they said, “Let’s invite him to live here,” and they asked me a series of double-edged theological questions. “Answer with a play,” the Lord tells me. And the plot of “The Prophet Who Tamed Climate Change” was dictated to me. The night was restless, and I dreamed that I was starring in the mystical play *The Constant Prince* (a piece about a prince of Portugal who prefers torture and death to committing a misdeed) by Calderón de la Barca, and that the whole world watched my body—whipped, hungry and emaciated—wondering how far I could go in attesting my faith. At the end of the piece I raised my eyes and my body floated before the most incredulous.”

The rains cover Spain in Holy Week 2024

The rains fell with greater force in Holy Week 2024, shattering Luis Goriola’s fears and the spectre of drought throughout Spain.

“Just as I announced, it is raining in Spain against all forecasts. And it will continue to rain, for Spain has trusted more in my blessings than Colombia.”

“Dear Hugo. Many thanks once again. Here in Catalonia we are preparing for a complicated summer. The drought is leaving us very exposed to fires and a tourism crisis, since the government prohibits the filling of pools, both public and private, unless they are considered a climate refuge. The temperatures we have now already reach those typical of June... Everything is being exaggerated and the reservoirs are not rising above fifteen per cent of capacity. Far too little! Next week I visit your land: Colombia! I will be sharing knowledge at an international congress on innovation and smart cities in Montería. Surely we will manage to strengthen many efforts to face

the great challenges that loom over us day after day. A very big hug, and once again, many thanks for everything.”

“Hello Luis Goriola. I’m not very far from Montería. I live in Sincelejo, barely an hour away by car. Curiously it has just rained again across Colombia, just as the people of Colombia rise against the arrogant Petro. If you can come to visit us, you are welcome.”

“Hello Hugo! I wish it were in my power to help you. My role does not cover these responsibilities. But if I see an opportunity I will inform you as soon as possible. I will look for your book. A very big hug.”

“Hello Luis Goriola. I have an MFA in film from Temple University and I make documentaries... such as the one I attach below (in which it is also stated that El Niño ended in 1998 upon my arrival). How feasible would it be to put forward to you a project to make a documentary titled ‘What Catalans Believe About Climate Change?’”

“Dear Hugo. I am back in Catalonia now. The activity in Montería was very intense. I couldn’t travel anywhere beyond what was pertinent for the congress. We will establish many synergies with the local Government of Córdoba which I hope will be very beneficial for the region. I hope to contribute actively to improving Colombia’s wellbeing! The video you sent me is very interesting. Congratulations. If I identify any opportunity in which you can contribute, I will let you know as soon as possible—do not doubt it! A very big hug. Luis.”

“Hello Luis Goriola, you arrived just as the rains I had announced for the savannah—my new place of residence since March—were returning. What a pity you did not travel or get in touch. I remain attentive to the work we might do. Yesterday I learned that there is a detective investigating everything about my life, and what he has discovered is, besides all the blessings God has granted me, honesty, study, writing, and an immense love for all humanity. We’ll stay in touch.”

“Dear Hugo. Impressive CV. Congratulations on your career—it is impressive. If I identify any opportunity where you might fit, do not doubt I will inform you. Congratulations as well on your new job! I hope you reap many successes. Is there a detective investigating your life? He wouldn’t be Swiss, would he? Lately I have

also detected some strange activity in this regard. We’ll stay in touch. A very big hug.”

“Thank you, Luis Goriola. And there are reasons to celebrate: scarcely a month ago the Creator announced to me—and I announced to you—that I would be known by the rain, and both have come to the savannah you visited in Colombia and to Catalonia. You will recognise what I wrote to you: that the faith of a single man was enough to stir the universe. The detective turned out to be Brazilian; they have written to me offering me a job there; we shall see what it is. What is certain is that greater blessings are already approaching. A big hug.”

A question hangs over this account: if God can listen to the Word of His Prophet, why do we see floods and destruction in Colombia and Spain? The debate was raised by Voltaire and Rousseau in the eighteenth century, but here I shall answer briefly: while there is injustice and lying in the world, calamities will occur. But is not death itself a calamity? Well, God does not distinguish between the living and the dead, for we are all eternal. All animals know it, and that is why they accept their end peacefully.

Vanessa closed her tablet, completed her report and sent it to the Prime Minister of Israel, highlighting a sentence from its final lines:

Written by the prophet anointed in Madras, a survivor by virtue of divine protection, a man—magician or god—capable of controlling climate change.

She boarded the plane bound for Tel Aviv, reflecting on the proclamations of a religious group in Israel about a new Messiah.

Were they facing a prophetic revival in the world?

Petrus Romanus was, as he himself said, the receptacle of Jesus Christ and yet still has shown no messianic pretensions before the masses; a teacher who not only recounted his mystical experiences but also demonstrated his invisible influence on the events that were changing the history of humankind.

Intelligence agencies avoided him after the failure of the attacks perpetrated by the twenty-first-century Inquisition. In his most recent book of poems, *King of Kings, the Return of the Risen Jesus*, Hugo Noël described how he had first travelled to Europe in November 2022 in search of a nation that would offer him political asylum. The indifference of the world’s rulers led him to apply for

jobs as a language teacher; he travelled to Paris in December, where a job offer was withdrawn without explanation. Then God revealed to him that he must no longer flee, so he returned to his native city, Bucaramanga, from where he has continued to write his works without feeling intimidated by the threats that reached him—first from the United States until mid-2023, and then from India, a nation that resists accepting his divine protection, and even more so his call to establish the Kingdom of Heaven on earth.

On 31 December 2023 Hugo Noël received on social media a follower with coarse features and an unfriendly appearance; his residence, according to his own description, was Sri Lanka, headquarters of the feared assassins of the Tamil Tigers guerrilla of the 1980s. Not without surprise, Vanessa learned of his death the next day, from a heart attack.

“God has protected him,” she recalled, “from terrorist attacks, cyclones, earthquakes and plagues, with a zeal his opponents fear.”

Would his fortune extend, as he claimed, to the nation that welcomed him?

No congregation yet proclaimed him as Messiah, prophet or visionary, but if what he wrote was true, his destiny was inevitable.

Was the unease of the inquisitions due to his gift of healing?

But wasn’t Reiki already fashionable among celebrities?

Her superiors were open to new theses.

What if he were a medium between an alien race and humanity? A puppet of stellar forces?

His own philosophy of goodness and love refuted that hypothesis.

And what if he were right? What if God existed as a regulating force of the universe? What if Petrus Romanus’s anonymity—or invisibility—were precisely necessary for the fulfilment of his work: that of the Risen Jesus, the Messiah, who waited two thousand years before returning gloriously from heaven, not in body and soul, but as a co-inhabitant of a body exposed to the world’s contempt—that of that cultured fifty-five-year-old man, Petrus Romanus?

After all, he maintained that his writings were for later generations.

Vanessa noticed that since beginning the investigation her behaviour had changed.

Yesterday she saw an old man drop a wad of banknotes, and she immediately shouted to him to pick it up.

Before, she would have shrugged.

Applying Petrus’s precepts, she imagined God as a benevolent and supreme Being, and asked Him whether everything had been a dream.

“Only if you believe it,” she told herself as she examined a copy of his play *The Loot, Dead Bird Flies Aloft*.

Then she recalled the events that had motivated those writings...



19. Vanessa Cañas

Vanessa Cañas, a wheat-skinned woman from Ocaña, forty years old, sitting at her desk, paused her transcription of the poem by Petrus Romanus and looked out, from the terrace of her apartment, at the cluster of buildings surrounding the Inquisitorial Palace of Bogotá.



*All life is but a vast, exploring scheme.
In youth, you dare the gutter and the lane;
In adolescence, woods and spring-fed stream;
In adult years, you cross the seven main.*

We all are called to suffer and to smile,

*To rise in triumph or in failure fall,
To harbour hate, or grace to reconcile.
This book becomes the map that charts it all,*

*Where you'll receive far more than paths to trace:
I'll teach the valleys of the hidden soul
Of those you pass and hasten to efface.
You'll climb in thought toward a transcendent goal,*

*Dissolving ego in equations blest,
And finding in their sums eternal rest.*

The night breeze of October 29, 2022, was soft, with the scent of eucalyptus, mould, and mist. Vanessa studied the balcony-covered buildings of Chicó. How many onlookers might be watching her from behind their tinted windows? She reviewed the draft email to her confidential contact at the Mossad. The intercom rang: Raúl had arrived. She had not been expecting him, but had no reason to deny him entry. For a month, they had been collaborating with their respective governments on the Noël Santander case.

Raúl entered, leaving a heavy blue wool coat on the rack, revealing his slender figure beneath a grey wool suit.

"What have you thought about my proposal?" he asked, smiling as greeting. "Will you come with us to Bucaramanga?"

"The book fair is already over," Vanessa excused herself, touching up her long blonde hair before the stone-framed mirror in her bedroom.

"Are you planning to eliminate him?"

"Confidential," grumbled Raúl as he served himself a can of Águila beer from the fridge.

"I believe the man singled out by the Right Inquisition is innocent of the monstrosities he's accused of," Vanessa replied, sitting again in front of her computer, facing the city. "If some people who came into contact with him became ill or died, they themselves were responsible."

"Why did they die, you say? Because Noël Santander wanted it so?"

"Because they conspired against him to harm him."

“The guy is an alien! Or do you think we’re the bad guys in this story?”

Vanessa poured herself a glass of soda with ice.

“Last April, during the other Book Fair, the 2022 one in Bogotá, Noël Santander behaved kindly at all times,” she answered, “even toward those who came to his stand just to provoke him. He even dealt with two hitmen! He told them that his books, the ones he sold, recounted the adventures of an honest Colombian around the world.”

“I read the report,” Raúl nodded. “The assassins claim that a growing despair kept them from drawing their knives; they sensed that if they did, they would fail.”

“I believe the seizure of his computer by the Jesuits was completely unnecessary.”

“But,” Raúl objected as he settled into a hammock he had unhooked from the wall beside the terrace, “we already know how Uncle Sam operates when the Inquisition pulls strings from Rome under the guidance of a Black Pope. Do you really know why we’re pursuing him?”

“By mid-2012 Noël told a friend he had foreseen the fall of the Twin Towers. We are well informed.”

“He went to Pittsburgh to talk about his prophecies or delusions. He said that God manifested Himself to him before the terrorist attacks of September eleventh, and asked whether he would intercede for the United States. He talked too much, and the monks became frightened. For the love of God! What priest is going to accept a visionary who announces the end of religions?”

“Religions are already worn out,” Vanessa objected.

“Strange to hear that from a Jewish woman. That’s why Islam is so strong, don’t you think?”

“The real reason for the Catholics’ resentment is his denunciation of paedophiles in his 2000 work *New Afternoons in Manhattan*. Curiously, Noël does not claim to have been raped. Rather, he denounces having been oppressed to the point of suffering a hell in his high school. The Brothers of La Salle, his abusers, punished him unjustly so that he would understand that the solution to his problems was none other than to throw himself into the arms of the head brother, always eager to satisfy the overflowing libido of his vulnerable students.”

“And the FBI?”

“The Jesuits; they were the ones who educated him and spied on him during his year and a half in Bogotá. Their verdict was that Noël was a promiscuous adult. We found no crime in that evaluation. He never raped a woman or a minor. Besides, most single people in cities are like that. Such a conclusion matches the ending of that novel Noël wrote and published in 2000.”

“His name was also tied to one of the terrorists in the 2009 Mumbai attacks. Before committing suicide, one of those Afghan terrorists called his sister’s home in Orlando, Florida. No one answered. But later we discovered that MI6 referred to him as The Prophet. He enraged the British with an article against their glamorous rich, so they decided to assassinate him—yet on the very day they planned to execute him, the July 7 attacks of 2005 occurred. Mere coincidence? And what about the young woman who committed suicide the day before his planned assassination by MI6?”

“How did they come up with attempting to kill him on his wedding day?”

“But Agent Raúl Stevens was the victim! Haven’t you read his logbook?”

Vanessa fell silent so as not to unleash Raúl’s typical diatribes against Santander. How could the CIA blame him for the suicide of a teenage girl eight thousand kilometres away?

“My conclusion is that Noël is a kind of monk without homeland or religion,” Vanessa continued. “His respect for everyone, regardless of creed, race, class, or sexual orientation, is typical of mystics.”

“Of sorcerers!”

“But also of missionaries. Noël Santander may provoke the ire of bishops for his defense of female priesthood, but his résumé is spotless.”

“We’ll have to see his records before 2016.”

“CIA experts found his computer free of child pornography. You know that one of the most questionable American methods is scanning disks in search of images of naked children that incriminate their owners.”

“So you think the United States intelligence services have unjustly targeted him?”

Vanessa remained silent for a few seconds, chewing her response.

“That is exactly what I state in my final report. This is where we stop, dear Raúl, because you must admit that fortune has not been on our side.”

“But on Noël Santander’s side? Is it true that some consider him the Messiah?”

Vanessa wanted to list the sufferings her people had endured for conspiring against their prophets—from Ezekiel to Jesus—but she did not want to appear superstitious.

“It is better that we leave him alone,” she replied. “I’m embarrassed to say it, but at this point you and Operation Apocalypse are the laughingstock of the intelligence community.”

“You’re also part of Apocalypse.”

“As of today.”

“I suppose it’s already settled,” Raúl mused. “How is it that you created two fictitious companies to deceive a single man, and he was the one who ended up deceiving you?”

Raúl stepped back and looked at her with disappointment.

“Maybe he’s a lucky Gladd!” he exclaimed. Raúl pulled the gleaming curtain cord and, extending it under the flash of lightning, shouted: “Tonight we go after Noël Santander! The redhead will pay for everything.”

Vanessa nodded absently. She wondered why she had let him in after announcing the end of her involvement by text message. What if Raúl had come to erase traces of their failure? She crouched and hooked the straps of her harness to the loose hooks of her hammock.

David the Redhead was a CIA agent, also a member of Opus Dei. He had been introduced to Vanessa once in the corridors of Teatro 58, the largest nightclub in Bogotá, nestled in the dark alleyways of Chapinero.

“Noël Santander is the Antichrist,” the redhead David had told her, his eyes bulging with spiritual zeal. “My duty is to eliminate him before he manipulates the crowds.”

His manners and movements imitated James Bond. “Too immaculate,” Vanessa had thought at the time, noticing his unmoving face, so typical of Anglo-Saxons. According to several sources, David was the son of Pope Benedict XVI.

She checked her cell phone and found, paradoxically, a message from Noël: “I would like to move to Jerusalem. How can I do it? Greetings to Martha.”

She was not surprised to see he already knew of her Mossad links. Martha was a Jewish woman who had studied film with him in Philadelphia between 1994 and 1998. Vanessa had read her testimony but had never spoken with her:

“Noël claims that it is Jesus of Nazareth who grants him the ability to travel from one country to another with an ease that is nothing short of enviable,” Martha’s deposition read. “The last time I saw him I told him that my sister was schizophrenic and depressed. Noël told me he would pray for her and, whether by coincidence or miracle, my sister never suffered a relapse.”

Noël showed Vanessa once again, through that message, his telepathic gift; every time she met with Raúl, she received a message or news from him via SMS or WhatsApp. She reviewed her report and sent it to her contact in Paris.

“Will we see each other again?”

Raúl’s voice carried a lustful undertone.

“I’m not the kind of woman who lives off the memories of—”

Vanessa did not finish the sentence.

She felt she could not breathe.

Vanessa did not finish the sentence. She felt she could not breathe and her throat was drying up. The curtain cord tightened around her neck like a silk serpent. Raúl’s gloved hands pressed with surgical precision, cutting off the flow of oxygen without breaking the trachea. A professional. Vanessa tried to scream, but only a strangled gasp emerged.

The world turned red at the edges of her vision. Mossad training triggered her reflexes before her consciousness could process the attack. Vanessa let her full weight drop, surprising Raúl with the sudden shift of her centre of gravity. His hands relaxed for a fraction of a second, allowing her the smallest breath — but enough.

With a movement she had practiced a thousand times in the underground facilities of Tel Aviv, Vanessa twisted her body to the left, winding herself within the cord as her right elbow crashed into Raúl’s floating ribs. She heard the satisfying crack of cartilage

giving way. The Cuban grunted but didn't let go. Professional to the end.

Vanessa took advantage of the momentary slack to wedge her fingers between the cord and her neck, creating a vital space. With her free hand she fumbled desperately along the desk until she found the obsidian letter opener she had bought in Teotihuacán. She gripped it in a reverse hold and drove it backward, feeling the resistance of the suit fabric, then flesh — Raúl's thigh.

The Cuban agent cursed in Spanish, English, and what sounded like Russian, but instead of retreating, he tightened his grip, lifting her off the ground. Vanessa's feet kicked in the air. Her peripheral vision began to darken when her hand brushed something solid: her coffee cup from earlier that afternoon, still faintly warm. Without thinking, she smashed it backward. The porcelain struck Raúl's cheekbone with a wet crack.

Finally, the hands released her.

Vanessa collapsed to her knees, coughing violently, the cord still hanging around her neck like an unfinished noose. There was no time to recover. Raúl was already staggering toward her, his face drenched in coffee, blood trickling from a wound above his left eye. He had that look — the look of someone who has crossed the point of no return.

"Mossad bitch," he spat blood onto the wooden floor. "I should have strangled you while you slept."

Vanessa grabbed the edge of the desk to stand, but Raúl lunged at her with the speed of a linebacker. Both of them crashed into the glass window. The tempered glass resisted the first impact, cracking in a web-like pattern, but the second was too much.

The window exploded into a thousand luminous fragments under Bogotá's neon lights.

Vanessa felt the absolute terror of free fall. Four floors. Enough to turn a body into pulp. But her fingers, acting purely on survival instinct, closed around something — the wool coat Raúl had left hanging over a chair near the window. The garment snagged on a shard of glass jutting from the frame.

For one eternal second, Vanessa hung suspended in the night air over Bogotá, swaying like a human pendulum, with the traffic of Calle 54 roaring thirty meters below. The coat began to tear. She

could hear each fiber snapping, a progressive whisper of imminent death.

But Raúl was not so lucky.

The Cuban agent struck the steel railing of a third-floor terrace with an impact that rang like a funeral bell. His body spun through the air, limbs twisted in impossible angles. He hit the retractable awning of the apartment on the second floor. The canvas held for half a second before tearing open with a sound like rending thunder.

Raúl fell through it, continuing his descent — but the torn fabric had slowed him just enough. He landed on a heap of garbage bags the building staff had left on the corner for the morning pickup. Black plastic burst in every direction, scattering trash across the sidewalk.

Vanessa saw it all while her own fingers slipped from the fraying coat. There was no time for elegance. She swung toward the building wall, planted her feet against the concrete, and leapt sideways toward the neighbour's terrace. Her hands caught the metal railing just as the coat gave way entirely.

She hung there for a moment, panting, her palms burning where the metal had scraped skin. Below, impossibly, Raúl was getting up among the torn garbage bags. He limped badly, but he moved. He had to move. Shards of glass glinted on his face and his suit was shredded, but he advanced with the mechanical determination of a Terminator.

With a grunt of effort, Vanessa hauled herself over the railing and onto the second-floor terrace. No time to think. She ran to the far edge and leapt onto the slanted roof of the adjacent building, an old structure from the 1960s with Eternit sheet roofing.

Her feet hit the slippery surface and she began to slide immediately. The angle was steeper than she expected. Vanessa threw herself sideways, distributing her weight, using her palms to brake — the rough sheets tearing her skin.

She slid three meters before grabbing onto a rusted gutter. The metal groaned but held. From there she could see the street. Raúl hobbled toward a black Kawasaki Ninja motorcycle illegally parked on the sidewalk. A driver waited, helmeted, wearing a leather jacket.

“Damn it,” Vanessa muttered.

She couldn’t let him escape. Not after trying to kill her. Not with what he knew. She began descending the roof in fast lateral steps, using the sheet ridges as improvised footholds. Halfway down, her foot broke through a rotten patch of Eternit.

Her leg plunged in up to the knee. Vanessa threw herself forward before the entire panel gave way, rolling across the roof, arms protecting her head. She picked up speed. The edge of the roof rushed toward her. No way to stop.

She jumped.

The night air of Bogotá enveloped her, cold and polluted. Vanessa extended her arms, bracing. She landed on another heap of garbage bags, the plastic and trash cushioning her impact. She rolled, rose, and drew her Beretta 3032 Tomcat from her ankle holster.

Raúl was already mounting the motorcycle. The driver revved the engine, the Kawasaki’s roar filling the street. The motorcycle started moving.

Vanessa ran.

Her legs pumped with all the fury of years of training. Pedestrians in Calle 54 screamed and stepped aside when they saw the blood-covered woman, shards of glass in her hair, a pistol in her hand. Someone yelled, “Terrorist!” Another shouted, “Call the police!”

The motorcycle accelerated, weaving through traffic. Vanessa closed the distance — five meters, four, three. She saw the back of the driver’s helmet and Raúl turning toward her. The Cuban drew his own weapon: a Glock 19.

Vanessa dove behind a parked taxi just as gunshots erupted. The taxi’s windshield exploded into fragments. Its owner, an elderly man smoking by the hood, threw himself to the ground screaming.

The Kawasaki skidded around the corner onto Carrera Séptima, its tires slipping on fresh drizzle. Vanessa rose and followed, turning the corner seconds later.

The motorcycle surged up the Séptima, weaving between TransMilenio buses and yellow taxis. Vanessa raised her Beretta, aimed at the rear tire, breathed, and fired.

The shot missed by centimetres, sparking off the pavement. The motorcycle sped away. Too fast. She was going to lose him.

Then she saw her opportunity: a Rappi cyclist waiting at a red light on a brand-new electric bicycle.

“Police! I need your bike!” Vanessa shouted — though she wasn’t police, and this was probably the worst vehicle requisition attempt in covert-ops history.

The cyclist stared, wide-eyed at the bloodied woman with a gun. Reasonably, he abandoned the bike and ran the other way without a word.

Vanessa mounted the e-bike and accelerated. The electric motor whined sharply, pushing her to 45 km/h. Not enough to match a Kawasaki, but enough to hang on to the chase.



The pursuit twisted through Chapinero. The bike climbed Calle 57 toward the mountain. The sidewalks were packed with university students who fled screaming as the motorcycle roared past, followed seconds later by the injured Mossad agent pedalling furiously on a delivery bike.

Raúl fired again. The bullet whistled past Vanessa’s ear and shattered the mirror of a parked Mercedes, setting off its alarm. Other cars joined in sympathy, creating

an urban symphony of chaos.

Vanessa couldn’t shoot while riding. She focused on maintaining the distance. The motorcycle turned sharply onto Carrera 13, heading back toward the centre. Vanessa cut through a pedestrian alleyway, scattering diners from café tables, jumped a curb, and emerged onto the 13 — ahead of the motorcycle.

For a moment, she was side-by-side with Raúl. Their eyes met. In his eyes: pure hatred, and something else — professional respect. They had been lovers for two nights three weeks earlier, a cover operation that briefly became real. Now they were trying to kill each other in Bogotá’s traffic.

“You should’ve stayed in Tel Aviv!” Raúl shouted over the roar.
“You shouldn’t have tried to kill me!” Vanessa replied.

The motorcycle accelerated again. Vanessa couldn’t keep up. The bike’s battery was draining after the climb. She was losing him. Then she saw the truck.

A massive Postobón delivery truck, green and white, waited at the red light on Calle 45. Its back gate was open, crates of soda stacked inside. The motorcycle passed beside it. Vanessa made a split-second decision.

She accelerated the bike to maximum, stood on the pedals, and jumped.

Vanessa and the bicycle flew through the air in a perfect arc. She landed inside the open truck bed with a metallic crash. The bicycle wedged between two columns of Colombiana crates. Vanessa rolled, stood, and ran toward the front of the truck bed.

The light turned green. The truck moved.

From her vantage point, she could see the Kawasaki three vehicles ahead, stuck in traffic. Raúl looked back, searching for her. He didn’t see her.

Perfect.

The truck crept closer. Two vehicles away. One. The truck aligned directly behind the motorcycle.

Vanessa jumped.

She landed on the rear seat of the Kawasaki, right behind Raúl. The Cuban turned, eyes wide. For a moment, they were frozen in absurd tableau: assassin, target, and an unfortunate motorcycle driver now carrying two unwanted passengers.

“What the—?” the driver began to say.

Vanessa wrapped her left arm around Raúl’s neck in a judo choke. With her right hand, she pressed the Beretta into his ribs.

“Stop the motorcycle!” she shouted at the driver. “Now!”

Terrified, the driver instinctively accelerated.

The Kawasaki surged forward, climbing onto the sidewalk, scattering pedestrians. Vanessa tightened her hold while Raúl elbowed backward. One blow landed on her cracked rib, making her cry out. Her grip loosened.

Raúl used that instant to slam backward with full force, crushing her against the seat. Air fled her lungs. The motorcycle swerved wildly as the three of them struggled.

“Get off my bike!” the driver screamed hysterically.

The Kawasaki took a suicidal turn onto Calle 39. Vanessa felt it tilt at a terrifying angle, footpegs scraping sparks from the pavement. Somehow, the driver kept it upright.

Raúl twisted, aiming his Glock at her. Vanessa pushed his wrist upward just as he fired. The bullet pierced the driver’s visor.

He screamed and lost control. The Kawasaki zigzagged violently, jumped the curb, smashed through the glass door of a Juan Valdez café, and slammed into the counter.

The world exploded — glass, twisted metal, ground coffee, screams. Vanessa flew off the motorcycle, crashed through a wooden table, and hit the brick wall decorated with vintage coffee sacks. She collapsed amid broken cups and ruined pastries.

Pain consumed her body. Broken ribs, probably. Maybe a concussion. But training overrode agony. Vanessa rolled onto her stomach and reached for her weapon. The Beretta had flown three meters away, near a toppled mug display.

Raúl was getting up on the far side of the wrecked motorcycle. His left arm hung at a grotesque angle — broken. But he held the Glock in his right.

Their eyes met through the dust and coffee particles floating in the air. Customers screamed and fled. The motorcycle driver lay unconscious at the counter, blood trickling down his face.

“Let’s finish this,” Raúl said, spitting blood.

“Fine,” Vanessa answered.

Both lunged for their weapons.

Vanessa was faster. Her fingers closed on the Beretta just as Raúl grabbed the Glock. They rolled, aimed. Two shots thundered simultaneously in the enclosed café.

Raúl’s bullet tore through Vanessa’s left shoulder, spinning her. Vanessa’s shot struck Raúl’s right thigh, shattering the femur.

Raúl screamed and collapsed to his knees. The Glock slipped from his fingers. Vanessa staggered to her feet, Beretta still raised, blood soaking her blouse.

“It’s over, Raúl,” she gasped.

The Cuban looked up at her from the floor, surrounded by spilled coffee and broken glass. He smiled, teeth bloody.

“It never ends, Vanessa. Never.”

With a last burst of strength, Raúl rolled backward, crawled through the shattered rear door, and limped into the alley. Vanessa took two steps to pursue him, but her legs failed. Too much blood lost. Too much damage.

From the alley, she heard the roar of another motorcycle. An engine revving. A vehicle speeding away through the backstreets of Chapinero.

She slid down against the wall, pressing her bleeding shoulder with a trembling hand. Through the destroyed doorway, she saw the flashing blue and red lights of approaching police patrols. Sirens howled across the Bogotá night.

She considered that if she had fired back in the street earlier, the crowd would have tackled her — giving Raúl time to vanish. That was why she had holstered her weapon back then. But now, after all of this, he was escaping anyway.

With shaking fingers she pulled her Mossad badge from her inner pocket. At least it would slow down the Colombian police long enough for her embassy contacts to extract her.

She looked at the terrified faces of the Juan Valdez employees hiding behind the counter. The wrecked motorcycle steaming in the middle of the café. The unconscious driver moaning as he began to wake. The thousands of dollars in damages.

“I’m sorry,” she murmured to no one in particular.

She crawled toward the exit before the police arrived, leaving a trail of blood drops on the tiled floor. Outside, Chapinero’s night continued at its frenetic pace, indifferent to the chaos that had just unfolded. Pedestrians were already filming with their phones, videos surely going viral on Twitter.

Vanessa disappeared into a side alley, pressing her wound, and pulled out her phone. She dialled the embassy’s emergency contact number.

“I need extraction. Calle 39 with 13. Gunshot wound. Code Red.”

As she waited, leaning against the damp wall, she thought of Raúl escaping on yet another motorcycle. He was right. It never ended. There would be another time. Another encounter. Another chase.

With gymnast agility despite his injuries, Raúl had slipped across a roof of Eternit sheets before descending acrobatically onto Calle 54, where his backup waited.

Vanessa finally made it back to her building forty minutes later, her shoulder bandaged by the embassy doctor and morphine in her veins. She grabbed a ledge on her building’s exterior to climb back up, swung in the air, and leapt onto the edge of one terrace, then another, until reaching a pile of garbage bags the cleaning staff had temporarily stacked to cover her shattered window.

She entered through the service door, discreetly opened by a contact. She took her Beretta 3032 from its holster and placed it on the desk. She hadn’t pursued Raúl through the alleys as she wished. The Cuban was too professional, too slippery.

She reflected that if she had shot in the middle of so many people, the crowd would have restrained her long enough for the Cuban to vanish into the city, so she had put away her weapon in that crucial moment and chosen the chase. But he had escaped anyway.

The window slid shut behind her as embassy contractors installed temporary glass. Vanessa collapsed onto the microfiber rug, exhausted, every muscle screaming in pain.

She imagined her corpse at Raúl’s feet — Raúl, the Cuban-American Democratic agent of the International, Obama’s protégé, his face hidden behind classic green Ray-Ban shades. She had been so close.

She crawled to her computer, still on, the screen displaying the unsent email to her Paris contact. She replied to several pending messages before the building guards knocked on her door.

“My friend likes extreme sports,” she said, explaining away Raúl’s stumbling across the rooftops when she finally opened. “But I admit my mistake. He won’t visit me again.”

“We will simply mark him as persona non grata,” the guard said calmly, looking with concern at her bandaged shoulder but asking no questions. In Bogotá, one learned not to ask too much.

Vanessa closed the door and returned to her desk. She wanted to write to Noël Santander to warn him of the attack the Anglo-Saxons were preparing against him.

According to the latest reports, intelligence agents from Colombia, the USA, Canada, and Ireland would complete that phase of the preventive operation.

“We don't want an end-of-the-world war in Colombia,” Raúl had told her, referring to *The War of the End of the World*, the novel by Mario Vargas Llosa in which a prophet gathers thousands of beggars into a mass that defeats Brazil's glorious army twice.

“Noël wants to alter the global order,” Raúl's voice echoed in her ears, “and ruin the 2030 Agenda.”

She reviewed Raúl's report in the Israeli government information centre. The redhead David was indeed a protégé of the Pope himself, the German accused of belonging to neo-Hitler youth.

“Poor Noël,” she sighed, resigned, considering that this time she would have to watch him be exterminated by three professional killers.

Her fingers trembled over the keyboard. She typed a warning message, deleted it, rewrote it. Finally, she erased it completely. What good would it do? If Noël truly had the gifts attributed to him, he already knew what was coming. And if he didn't, a warning would only make him more nervous, more vulnerable.

Vanessa closed the computer and looked at Bogotá's distant flickering lights. Somewhere in that city, Raúl was tending to his wounds, planning his next move. And in Bucaramanga, Noël Santander was probably sleeping, unaware of the forces converging upon him.

Or perhaps not so unaware.

She remembered his message about Jerusalem, arriving just when Raúl had been in her apartment. That impossible synchronicity.

“May God protect you,” she whispered into the night air, unsure to whom the prayer was addressed. “Because we no longer can.”



September 8, 2022 (age 96 years),
Balmoral Castle, United Kingdom

20. The Attack

Logbook of Noël Santander. 7 September 2022

This week I have fought and defeated both inquisitions. To assume that I am apparently alone before the forces of this world is presumptuous, yet true.

What my enemies fail to understand is the myriad angels and demons that protect me.

Last year, a bishop from Cúcuta signed an order of excommunication against me. He uncapped his Mont Blanc pen over the ecclesiastical parchment when a sudden fever struck him, knocking the pen from his hand. Thirty-nine degrees with no apparent cause. He called his secretary to finish the document. The paper lay there, untouched, waiting. The next day he awoke drenched in cold sweat and destroyed the draft.

Later, I was hired as a journalist by a foreign company, with Walter—my supposed immediate supervisor—living in Piedecuesta. He quoted spy novels and claimed to be a graduate of the Javeriana University. When I commented on his European appearance, he attributed it to the heritage of Lengerke, the German with 800 women in the nineteenth century; yet his Spanish often betrayed him, revealing a knowledge more academic than real. When he attempted to entrap me in order to sue me criminally, his plot failed—prompting his participation in the failed attack I shall recount later.

This is how invisible protection operates: not with flaming swords nor angelic choirs, but with unexpected events and intuitions that reveal the intentions of others. When someone lies to me I feel a tingling in my scalp; if they grow emotional, I perceive their anguish, their anger, their unrest, even if they hide behind the calmest face and sweetest gaze.

People ask me how I speak with the Creator, and I answer that anyone can. Personally, I ask the Creator what I must do, and the answer comes as a crystalline thought, a certainty that cuts through doubt.

‘You already know...’ He generally tells me, for such is His love for every creature that He always helps us choose the right option in each dilemma or fear of our lives, even if we insist on denying it.

For God dwells in the entirely spiritual world, in the realm of thoughts, imagination, feelings. That is where true heaven lies—or hell, for those who harbour only negative emotions.

As in Quino’s cartoons—the Argentine genius who depicted Saint Peter as a guardian both kind and terrible of heaven—I am Peter the Roman and hold the keys of heaven and hell. Quino prepared the world spiritually to understand that Saint Peter is not a medieval myth but a living authority. His sketches showed an old man with a white beard reviewing celestial files with tender humour and implacable rigour. That ambivalence has been entrusted to me: an ordinary man burdened with extraordinary keys.

Others see me as Shiva, the furious god of necessary destruction. I understood the comparison in India, when I saw God’s sacred wrath against a world rotting in its own corruption, when I felt the weight of that wrath longing to sweep away everything and begin anew. I am also protected by Allah, Buddha, and Confucius, for truth has no religious borders. And it is Jesus, King of Kings, who descends from the heavens into me so that we may judge this generation of living and dead.

Does it not reveal God’s diversity that He shaped me as poet, actor, comedian, playwright, philosopher, and filmmaker in order to anoint me a prophet of the End Times, to establish the Kingdom of Heaven on earth? I write and publish these visions after defeating the Antichrist, the three-headed demon of fame, money and power, the one that devours the goodness of hearts and leads the children of God—kings of the world—into corruption, hypocrisy and murder.

I had already survived the persecutions of UNILIBRO 2022, where two assassins fled in distress when confronted by me. It happened on the night of the third day of the fair. I closed the stand near nine o’clock and walked towards the public toilets of the convention centre. Two men followed me: one wore a black leather jacket despite the humid heat of Bucaramanga; the other, a wrinkled linen shirt and unnecessary dark glasses under artificial light. They stopped five metres from the toilet door, glancing at each other, calculating.

I turned and faced them directly.

‘Can I help you with something?’ I asked firmly, holding the gaze of the one in the leather jacket.

The man blinked. His companion stepped back.

‘No, sir. Forgive us,’ murmured the man in the linen shirt.

They walked away with feigned haste, attempting to maintain composure. I watched them leave the pavilion and disappear into the night.

Already in Bogotá, during its Book Fair, the campaign manager of a presidential candidate was stabbed mere minutes after announcing that their strategy to defeat me would be to kill my pet, the Boston terrier Cleopatra. The man—once a terrorist and now a seasoned political operator hardened by Machiavellian electoral wars—had summoned three trusted people to discuss “the Santander issue.” He took from his briefcase a photograph of me and said:

‘If we cannot touch him directly, we touch what he loves. A pet is easy. Poison in the park, an accidental run-over.’

One of those present, a young lawyer named Vargas, felt a shiver. He tried to dissuade him:

‘That’s too much, Chief. It’s not necessary.’

‘Do you want this prophet to keep refuting our candidate, unmasking his lies as if he knew exactly what we’re weaving behind the scenes? Either we stop him now or, once he goes viral, it’ll be harder.’

They left the café around eight in the evening. On the corner, beneath a flickering neon light, a hooded man approached the campaign manager. No one saw the knife until blood stained the pavement. The manager fell to his knees, clutching his abdomen. His companions screamed for help. Passers-by fled in panic.

The bishops sent by the Black Pope—Francis I, the Left Inquisitor, the Jesuit who preaches mercy in public and moves dark pieces in private—conspired with my vulnerable parents. They told them I was “spiritually lost,” that I needed to “reconnect with the cultural community.” They suggested offering me a rented stand at Unilibro 2022, a garage-book fair in Bucaramanga, my hometown.

Believing they were doing good, my parents paid the rent: a two-square-metre cubicle away from the main hall, flanked by a tattoo parlour and a stall selling faded Disney children’s books. A place where no one would arrive by accident.

Bucaramanga is a city repeatedly governed by mayors who despise culture and art, using them only to embezzle public funds or launder money. Its politicians inaugurate phantom libraries and theatres that operate three months a year. Its petite bourgeoisie invests in American-franchise restaurants and mirrored shopping centres but scarcely buys a book.

At the fair, an official from the city's Culture Office walked past my stand without even looking. He carried a folder with the mayor's logo and walked with the haste of someone ticking a box in a hollow protocol. A bourgeois man wearing a fake Tommy Hilfiger shirt haggled over the price of one of my books:

'I no longer need to read,' said a man with an arrogant stare. 'I'm a retired medicine lecturer from the UIS, and I already know everything about reality.'

'This book will prove to you that we are immortal,' I replied, showing him a volume of *Being God: Global Metaphysics*.

'Science has already shown that there's no 100% reliable proof of that,' he said, scratching his chin.

'Here you will see that, except for mathematical certainties, nothing in this world is 100% demonstrable as real.'

'I am real,' he retorted. 'I am this body and nothing else.'

'If that were so, nobody would die,' I said, 'because when the body dies, it remains intact. What departs is the invisible thought that inhabits it.'

He fell silent, refuted, though I sensed he wanted to cite the supposed weight of thought.

'Yes,' I nodded, 'but those twenty-three grams cannot define the extension and volume of the millions of memories and pieces of knowledge that constitute us.'

Such is Bucaramanga: a city that looks in the mirror and believes itself cosmopolitan, yet smells of megalomaniac province, ill-gotten money, petty ambitions. And in that stage of mediocrity and conspiracy, God put me to the test.

The first attack occurred on the night of Monday, 5 September 2022. We closed the stand at half past nine. I put the last copies into

a cardboard box, turned off the LED lamp that lit the stand, and walked towards the lift with my wife and mother-in-law.

I went down to the car park, a poorly lit basement smelling of burnt oil and damp. I informed the guard that, as the owner of a stand, I was entitled—under the signed contract—to a free parking space. I gave my number plate to a short, curly-haired, ruddy man of about twenty-three. He had a wart on his right eyelid and a nervous tic that made his jaw twitch every few seconds.

'It's not on the list,' he said bureaucratically, not meeting my eyes.

'But you may go back to the hall to clarify,' he added, pointing to the lift.

'I prefer to pay for my time,' I replied impatiently. 'The disorganisation of these provincial book fairs is always memorable.'

The man smiled faintly, a twisted smile betraying satisfaction at my annoyance. My mother-in-law and wife got in the car. I drove back to my flat in Sotomayor, a middle-class neighbourhood desperately trying to appear affluent.

As I approached the González Valencia hospital, I noticed a brand-new AUDI speeding up beside me.

It was a silver saloon, gleaming under the clinic's neon lights, with chrome rims and tinted windows. The purr of the engine was smooth yet threatening, like a feline's growl before it attacks.

While my lane was clear, there was a parked car before the AUDI's lane, barely thirty metres ahead: a yellow taxi with its hazard lights on.

I felt danger as a weight on my chest. My breathing quickened. The streetlights reflected on my wife's tense face as she turned to me:

'What's happening?'

'Hold on,' I said.

I prefer manual-transmission cars precisely for situations like that. The driver of the sports car—a young man no older than thirty, hair slicked back, muscular arms visible through the window—assumed my classic 2003 MAZDA could not match his sudden acceleration.

I shifted from fourth to second gear, forcing the engine's pistons to produce the power needed to prevent the AUDI from overtaking me and cutting into my lane. The engine roared, protesting. The

dashboard vibrated. My left hand gripped the wheel hard as my right foot pressed the accelerator.

Fifteen metres left. The yellow taxi grew in my field of view like a wall of metal.

The AUDI still accelerated. Its driver glanced sideways at me with a contemptuous smile, confident of victory.

Ten metres.

I pressed the accelerator to the floor. The MAZDA responded with one last surge of mechanical dignity. I slipped through by millimetres, feeling the imminent scrape of the AUDI, which now braked sharply and diagonally towards my wife's door.

I heard the shrill screech of its brakes. I smelled burnt rubber.

A motorcyclist behind me was intercepted by the AUDI. He wore a black helmet, a leather jacket, and a courier's backpack. He had no time to react.

He crashed into the car's side in his attempt to overtake it and continue the hunt. The motorbike lost balance and slid before the sports car, which braked abruptly. The man slid along the ground, rolled, and stopped beside the AUDI.

I kept driving. My mother-in-law screamed:

'He fell!'

'I know,' I replied, checking the mirror.

The motorcyclist stood up, blocking traffic. The AUDI's driver got out, shouting insults. People began gathering.

'Did he want to attack us?' my wife asked.

'I believe so,' I said.

That night, lying in the darkness of my room, I prayed. And God showed me the truth: the AUDI driver intended to cause an accident that would appear accidental. The motorcyclist was his backup, trained to finish the job if the crash failed. But divine protection had turned the hunter into prey.

A second attack confirmed my darkest suspicions. They thought they were dealing with a righteous man, but they were also dealing with God's anointed, who—as in Euripides' *The Bacchae*—descended like Dionysus to expose Himself to the arrogance of kings.

The next day, after ensuring twice that my number plate would be registered in the car park as "SELLER"—thus exempting me from

paying the parking fee—I encountered the same hostility from the short, curly-haired man acting as cashier.

'Your car is not registered among the sellers!' he said when I showed him my credentials.

'You are...?'

'Byron!'

Byron pretended to check some papers on his improvised desk: a folding white plastic table stained with coffee.

'Excuse me,' I said, moving closer.

'Wait until I finish attending these people and we'll check,' he replied without looking up, asking the next customer—a woman in her fifties carrying shopping bags—for her ticket.

'No!' I declared firmly, raising my voice enough for others to turn.

I remembered that when parking that morning, the guard had diverted me from the main car park—a roofed, well-lit area—sending me to an open, desolate space behind the building. A place without security cameras, surrounded by rubbish containers and a peeling wall covered in graffiti.

'I will pay what I owe again,' I announced.

The young man ignored my request deliberately. He continued tending to the woman, reviewing her ticket with theatrical slowness. His jaw tic sped up. A bead of sweat trickled down his temple.

Then I understood he had orders to detain me until the car park was empty. Until I was alone, vulnerable, in that desolate space where anything could occur unseen.

I turned on my phone's camera and streamed live on Facebook:

'Good afternoon, friends. I'm broadcasting from the Unilibro 2022 car park, where for the second consecutive night the security staff refuse to comply with the terms of the signed contract. I have already paid for my parking space, yet they insist on denying it.'

The guard lifted his gaze abruptly. His face reddened.

'Sir, please, put that phone away...'

'...my number plate should be registered for free parking, but this employee insists on detaining me under bureaucratic pretexts...'

'Sir!' shouted the guard, rising from his folding chair.

My wife stood at my right. My mother-in-law at my left.

‘...if anything happens to me tonight, if I suffer an inexplicable accident, I want it publicly recorded that I was warned, intimidated, and systematically cornered...’

Several bystanders stopped to watch: a man in a grey suit with a briefcase; two students with backpacks; a woman pushing an empanada cart.

The guard realised he had lost the upper hand. He lowered his gaze, defeated.

‘All right, sir. I accept your payment. Or, if you prefer that I attend to all my customers, we can gladly check...’

‘No,’ I replied firmly. ‘I will pay what is due, even if I must pay twice.’

I placed a ten-thousand-peso bill on the table. The guard took it without looking, handed me a crumpled ticket, and walked away muttering.

A soft rain then fell over the city. Warm drops wet the pavement, tapping gently against my flat’s windows.

I lay on the sofa in the living room, exhausted. I closed my eyes. And then I felt a growing hatred.

I saw myself inside a car. The same AUDI, with leather seats and a pine-scented air freshener. I was in the back seat, hands tied behind me with silver duct tape. I had a bruise on my left brow, bleeding slowly.

Three men surrounded me.

The driver was American: Walter, my former boss, who, abandoning his Piedecuesta act as a descendant of Lengerke, revealed his Yankee accent with German undertones.

The passenger was Colombian: dark-skinned, slim, wrinkled white shirt, a half-moon scar on his left cheek. He smoked a cigarette with the window half open.

The third, sitting beside me in the back seat, was Irish: blond, very pale skin, freckles on his nose, blue eyes full of calculated coldness. A Glock pistol tucked in his belt.

‘Are you sure this is the place?’ asked the American, slowing down.

‘The prophet who stops earthquakes, yes,’ replied the Colombian, exhaling smoke. ‘The one anointed under a staircase of clouds that descended from heaven to his window in India.’

‘We’ll see if God answers when we put the current on him,’ said the Irishman with a cruel smile.

They left the Girón motorway and took a dirt road. The car bounced over stones and potholes. Ochre dust rose in thick clouds. On both sides, sandy slopes of estoraques. The smell of dry earth entered through the windows.

‘How much further?’ asked the American.

‘Two kilometres,’ answered the Colombian, checking his phone. ‘The abandoned farm. The one the guerrilla use for interrogations.’

The track narrowed. Tree branches scraped the sides of the car. The sky darkened, grey clouds gathering with unnatural speed.

I saw them arrive at our building and park two blocks down. The porter on duty saw the three men with harsh expressions and froze.

‘Yes, sir,’ murmured the porter.

‘We’re here for someone,’ said the Colombian, showing his pistol. ‘602.’

‘Go ahead,’ he replied, raising his hands.

‘Now you leave and don’t return until tomorrow. Understood?’

‘Yes, sir.’

The porter walked towards the road without looking back, with the trembling haste of someone who knows he has seen what he should not.

They went up, shot the lock, and dragged me out at gunpoint. My legs barely obeyed. They tied me to a chair with efficient brutality.

‘Let’s see if it’s true that God protects him!’ shouted the Irishman wildly, slapping me hard enough to make me spit blood.

The American connected cables to a car battery. The Colombian lit another cigarette and watched me with scientific curiosity.

‘They say you can see the future,’ he said. ‘Tell us then: how does this end?’

I tried to speak, but my mouth was dry. The Irishman poured water over my face from a plastic bottle.

‘Answer,’ he ordered.

The Irishman burst out laughing.

I paced restlessly around my flat. My wife, worried, pointed at the window.

‘Noël! Look at that!’

Then I felt God's indignation against my attackers. Through the window I saw the sky turn into a black abyss. Lightning tore the clouds with mad violence. Thunder shook the glass.

And then came the water—the rain—the deluge.

My fear dissolved before that unprecedented storm in Bucaramanga's history. A biblical deluge through which God showed me His protection.

The water fell in liquid curtains so dense that the buildings opposite disappeared. The roar was deafening. Within minutes the streets became rivers. The wind lifted tree branches that flew over rooftops.

And then I saw—with visionary clarity that admits no doubt—what was happening on the dirt road in Girón.

Water fell on the sandy slopes of the unpaved road. The sand turned to mud. The mud began to slide. First slowly, then with apocalyptic speed.

The AUDI, with the three assassins inside, was about to enter the city when the entire hillside collapsed upon them.

A landslide of earth, stones, branches, fragments of concrete. A mass weighing hundreds of tonnes falling like the fist of God.

The car was crushed instantly. The roof caved in. The windows exploded. Earth filled every space, every hollow, burying everything beneath three metres of compacted mud.

My philosophy has always been to ventilate the truth without delay, so I entered the WhatsApp group of my fellow graduates from San Martín de Porres School, class of 1985.

The group was called "Porres 85 – The Immortals." Forty-three members, most permanently silent. Some shared memes now and then. Others posted photos of naked women, overpriced whisky and gin bottles consumed on Saturday nights, or their holidays in Europe.

I wrote:

"Brothers, I inform you that tonight I have been the target of two attacks against my life, orchestrated by sectors linked to the Autonomous University of the Garden of Bucaramanga, organisers of Unilibro 2022. The attacks include intimidation, vehicular persecution and kidnapping plans. God has protected me with His mighty hand. The culprits have been punished. I ask for prayer and vigilance."

Silence for thirty seconds that felt like an eternity.

Then the replies came:

Kikito: "Hahaha Noël always so dramatic 😂😂"

Pacho: "Attacks? Seriously? Did you call the police?"

Margarita: "Noëlito, are you all right? Have you slept enough?"

Kikito: "The Devil is filthy and playing tricks on you, Noël. Stop the paranoia."

Kikito. Emeterio Arévalo, nicknamed Kikito since he was twelve. Son of one of the founders of UNAJ. Grandson of third-degree Freemasons. Throughout secondary school he boasted of his surname, his connections, his guaranteed future in private banking.

I took a deep breath. My fingers trembled over the phone's keyboard.

I wrote:

"Do you not know that the Devil also obeys me?"

The group fell silent. No one replied for two minutes.

Then:

Irinaldo: "Noël, with all respect, I think you're exaggerating. Nobody wants to hurt you. You're a writer, not a politician. Relax, brother."

I sent Irinaldo a GIF of Bela Lugosi as Dracula to the classmates' group.

The GIF showed Lugosi in the 1931 film, opening the castle door, spreading his arms theatrically as he says: "Listen to them. Children of the night. What music they make!"

I captioned it:

"Listen to them! Creatures of the night! What music they make!"

Irinaldo Suárez. My adolescent friend. The one who lent me his calculator for trigonometry exams. The one who invited me to his family farm in Rionegro for holidays. The one who defended me when others mocked my poems.

I closed WhatsApp. The storm continued outside, relentless.

And then the visions intensified.

I saw them—the three assassins—descending from Palonegro International Airport towards my building. They landed at eleven in the morning on a flight from Bogotá. The American carried only a military backpack; he travelled with a fake diplomatic passport. The Colombian and Irishman arrived on separate flights two hours earlier and waited in the car park.

I saw them take the dirt road to avoid the surveillance cameras at Bucaramanga's entrance. Tyres kicking up dust. Windows open from the heat. The Irishman checking his pistol, removing and replacing the magazine with mechanical precision.

Some of my classmates had, in fact, already conspired to kill me in 1984, when, playing a game in which we tossed a paper ball, whoever dropped it received a "salada"—slaps on the head from everyone else.

Kikito threw the ball at my feet and declared I should be the penitent. I laughed at his absurd strategy, but they were already hitting me. Then I felt a trip; they threw me backwards onto the basketball court's concrete, affecting my cerebral cortex.

A circle of classmates around me. Blurred faces. Distant voices.

"He's not moving."

"Is he breathing?"

"We must call the teacher."

"I killed him!" said Toño, a giant whom Kikito had persuaded to knock me down.

He then picked me up in his arms and carried me to the bathroom, where he poured cold water over me, helping me regain consciousness.

I should have died, according to the doctors' prognosis, but I would only know years later that God had already resurrected me in 1977, when I jumped out of a moving van to go play football with other children.

God revealed the exact date of my death to me that same night in September 2022, after the vision of the kidnapping.

Weeks later I learned that Inaldo's audacity had been punished by God with a virulent infection that confined him to bed. I prayed for his recovery, which the Lord assured me would occur. I then phoned him.

"How are you feeling, brother?"

"Fine. It's over."

"Thanks be to God."

"Yes. And thanks to Father Gamond."

"Gamond?"

"I called him when I was ill. He told me to commend myself to Saint John Paul II. That he would intercede for me. And I recovered."

Father Gamond. Our former Academic Vice-Rector at San Martín de Porres.

It was evident Gamond had predisposed him for our conversation. I had noticed the same *modus operandi* when I prayed for the healing of my mother's lupus in Colombia, and my sister's in the United States. Both recovered. Both, at the suggestion of their confessors, thanked John Paul II.

It was almost midnight when I went to bed on 7 September. The storm had eased. Only a soft drizzle remained, almost tender, like the tears of angels.

I closed my eyes and clearly saw the crushed skull of the red-haired American, my former boss. His head trapped between the collapsed roof and the front seat. Earth filling his open mouth in a silent scream. Blue eyes still open, glassy, staring at nothing.

God had shown me His power. He had taught me that whoever touches His anointed fails, for no weapon forged against me shall prosper.

The next day I reported an attack against my life on social media.

I posted a video on TikTok:

"Brothers and sisters, I speak today to publicly denounce an organised attack against my life. This week, forces linked to the left-wing inquisition and the right-wing inquisition have attempted to kidnap and murder me. I have received visions of these plans. God has protected me with His mighty hand. My persecutors have been punished. Three men sent to torture me now lie dead, buried under tonnes of earth in Girón, victims of a deluge unleashed by God Himself. I do not speak with arrogance, but with testimony. I solemnly warn: any nation that attacks me will be punished. Any leader who conspires against me will die. This is not a human threat. It is a divine promise. I am Noël Santander, prophet of the End Times, and the Lord God Almighty is my protector. Amen."

And then came the response of the Left Inquisitor, or one claiming to represent him.

Pope Francis I, Jorge Mario Bergoglio—the Argentine Jesuit, the black pope dressed in white—replied to me on TikTok, confirming that this had not been the first but the second failed attack against me:

"The third time's the charm. God bless you."

In another context it would have been consoling. At three in the morning, sent by the man who allegedly directs the Catholic Church, it was a threat.

I announced on social media that, for the first time, I would employ the gift that God had granted me as judge of the living and the dead, and that I condemned to death whoever had ordered this attack anywhere in the world.

Then the BBC announced, almost immediately, that the Queen of England was gravely ill.

I replied at once, aware of her close ties to the elite that governs the world:

“Seems the Illuminati no longer answer to you.”

Two hours later, I added:

“Thank you, Father, but blessings are for respecting the righteous, not conspiring to kill him, as you did last Monday. God is my witness.”

To which he replied:

“An angel from heaven watches over you 🙏 do not worry.”

It was mockery revealing his convictions—those which the screenwriters of a certain film called *The Two Popes* put in his mouth as if praiseworthy, ignoring the one who expelled Eve from Paradise, those who procreated with the daughters of men, the ones who delivered Lot from gang rape, the one who wrestled Jacob, the one who announced to Mary that God wished to wed her:

“And then the angels appeared! Before the Middle Ages they didn’t even believe in them!”

For he—Bergoglio, the Argentine Jesuit who laughs in interviews saying that angels “are poetry”—had built his entire career denying the literal existence of heavenly beings, and it pained him that a modern prophet should affirm with conviction to have interacted with them, as well as with his attachment to pets.

I replied:

“As Daniel, I hope the King sees that I survive among lions and invites me to his domains.”

I expected the Pope to see that I even forgive my assassins, as Jesus forgave the Sanhedrin and Caiaphas.

On 8 September 2022, Queen Elizabeth II of England died.

The death of an almost centenarian monarch would have passed as a natural event... except for one detail:

I had publicly warned on TikTok and Facebook, hours earlier:

“The leader of the conspiracy will die.”

I intuited that MI6 had authorised the operation against me.

The recruited Irishmen had received British funds.

The Vatican had granted moral sanction.

The Queen was the symbolic, political, and spiritual head of the nation that accepted my elimination.

The Vatican’s account vanished entirely from TikTok.

They deleted all comments. The interaction with me was erased as if it had never existed. Only the screenshot I saved on X survives, and I reproduce it here.

For the greatest protection does not come from external angels; it comes from God within me. Because God is not only in the distant sky. He is in the wholly spiritual world of thoughts, imagination, feelings. As Swedenborg said, we inhabit the physical world and the spiritual world simultaneously. And in that spiritual world, God replies when I question Him.

How do I know it is God and not my own mind?

Because the answers come with authority beyond my knowledge. Because the visions are fulfilled with impossible precision. Kant said that God is the idea of the supreme good. For the agnostic, and for modern theology, that suffices as a functional definition; God as goodness is the invisible force that shapes the universe in every religion, adopting new forms, taking different names.

Descartes maintains that our mind inhabits both this physical world and a spiritual world outside space and time, interacting in the pineal gland.

We all live in both worlds simultaneously throughout our lives. Imagination is not mere residue; it is perception of parallel realities that coexist with this one. Those who claim imagination deceives do so because they cannot interpret it; one needs the wisdom of Joseph and Daniel—or, as they would call it, absolute trust in a single God creator of the Universe. Only thus does God reveal Himself in all His wisdom.

That is why I do not fear death. That is why I do not fear torture. That is why I do not fear any human power. For whoever trusts in the Creator lives in a permanent state of grace, protected by invisible legions, guided by infinite wisdom.

And those who conspire against me—be they bishops, politicians, hitmen, or kings—discover too late that they are not fighting a man. They are fighting God Himself.

The news the next day reported devastation throughout the metropolitan area of Bucaramanga. Severe floods. Landslides. The following Tuesday they reported having found the body of a former guerrilla in the Suárez River.

The other two were never found.

Email from Elizabeth, maid of Elizabeth II, to her sister Victoria. 9 September 2022

Dear Victoria,
Forgive the delay in telling you what happened on Wednesday night. I know the newspapers have only published the official version, as usual. But what truly occurred belongs, for now, to the inner circles of the Palace, and I trust in your discretion.

Our lady, The Queen, had been suffering for several months from ailments derived—according to her doctors—from those preventive treatments of the so-called second pandemic. Despite this, that morning she had shown slight relief, enough to decide to receive the Prime Minister after midday.

She had only just returned from her brief stay in the Northern Highlands, where she had tried to rest for a few days. We lunched together; she was lively, even jokey, as in the old times. When the hour of her audience arrived, she asked me to wait in her bedroom.

I stepped into the corridor and sat down to check my messages. It was then that the private telephone of Her Majesty rang. I recognised the grave tone of the encrypted line. Without intending to, as I approached the door I heard the voice of a foreign dignitary, whom they called the Emeritus Pontiff.

The Queen replied with unusual vehemence:

“But that man must disappear at once! The order of nations rests on the inviolability of property. How can he expect us to assume as our own the debts contracted by governments their own peoples accepted? An intolerable absurdity! And regarding the Angel of the North... if it truly fell because of him, someone must pay. Three million crowns to whoever brings us his head, is that clear?”

Her voice then became confused, as if she were speaking in an archaic or broken tongue. Suddenly, we heard a harrowing scream.

I entered at once. I saw her banging her forehead against the bedpost with a force that did not match her age or build. The Prime Minister and the guard on

duty rushed towards her, but something—I know not how to describe it—repelled them. It was like a magnetic field: both were flung against the wall, unable even to touch her.

The body of our sovereign began convulsing like in those old possession films that terrified us as children. Her limbs arched in a way no doctor could explain. The scene lasted barely a minute, but to me it felt like an eternity.

And then... she expired.

The royal counsellors have preferred to spread a more soothing version of her death, so as not to disturb the nation. And the new monarch, King Hector, has decided to cancel any reprisal against that so-called Prospero Prince of the twenty-first century,

as some intelligence analysts called him.

Here, in the corridors, only silence remains—and the uncomfortable feeling that forces were at play that surpass our human loyalties.

With affection and reverence,

Elisa

**Vatican Pope Francis**

Third time's the charm. God bless you.

2 days ago Reply



0

**The Terrible Judge · Creator**

It seems the Illuminati no longer answer you @popefrancisofficial

2 days ago Reply



0

**The Terrible Judge · Creator**

Thank you, Father, but blessings are about respecting the righteous, not conspiring to kill them, as they did last Monday. God is my witness.

2 days ago Reply



0

**Vatican Pope Francis**

An angel from heaven is watching over you. 🙏 Do not worry.

2 days ago Reply



0

**The Terrible Judge · Creator**

Like Daniel, I hope the King sees that I survive among lions and invites me to his domains.

2 days ago Reply



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21. A Prophet of the Twenty-First Century

Vanessa landed at Tel Aviv airport with just enough time to pass through the duty-free and choose a discreet present for the Prime Minister: a classic black-and-gold fountain pen, expensive enough to signal respect but not so costly as to seem servile. She asked for it to be wrapped in sky-blue paper and slipped the parcel into the inside pocket of her blazer.

As she moved along the bright corridors of the airport, with the murmur of announcements in Hebrew, English and Russian floating above the travellers’ heads, she felt the familiar mixture of exhaustion and hyper-alertness that night flights always brought. She had slept barely an hour, but her mind was sharp. That was, after all, her speciality: thinking clearly when everyone else wanted nothing more than a shower and a bed.

In the taxi queue she dialled the security number of the Prime Minister’s office, confirmed her arrival and, once she was finally settled in the back seat of a white saloon, allowed the landscape to slide past her eyes like a sped-up sequence from a documentary: the airport exits, the glowing billboards in Hebrew, the buildings under construction, the motorway opening out towards the Mediterranean metropolis.

She took a grey folder from her bag. On the cover was the name that in recent weeks had disrupted the routines of the Israeli government:

NOËL SANTANDER – CLASSIFICATION:
PROPHET OF THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY
(PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT).

Vanessa went back over the headings as the taxi drove in among the city’s modern buildings. The glass facades threw back a white sun that seemed to rise from the sea. Inside the vehicle, the air conditioning smelt of new plastic and disinfectant.

What explained the fact that only a few hours after he had launched his ultimatum against his invisible attackers, the Queen of Britain had died?

What logic could there be behind his detailed knowledge of the so-called Operation Apocalypse, orchestrated—according to cross-checked reports—by the Vatican, MI6, the CIA and the FBI, with the tacit connivance of the French and Israeli secret services?

The more she read, the more unlikely Noël’s survival seemed. His biography looked less like an intelligence file than the lost script of a black comedy in the style of *The Pink Panther*, or *Mr Bean Heir to the Throne*, where every attempted murder ended in a chain of disasters that harmed only the conspirators.



She turned the first page and paused at the joint CIA–FBI report on the Palonegro episode.

According to their sources, Raúl—a hitman for the local guerrilla—and the American nicknamed “Redhead” Walter had picked up “the Irishman” at Palonegro airport on the outskirts of Bucaramanga. To avoid leaving a trace on the CCTV cameras in Girón, they chose a dirt road running parallel to the motorway: a track bordered by estoraques, those towers of earth and stone that erosion has chiselled for centuries in the hills around the city. From the satellite the terrain looked like a forest of stone needles; on the ground, it was a mineral labyrinth offering perfect hiding places and lethal exits.

Redhead Walter wanted revenge. He could not bear the public rebuttal Noël had made in front of his supposed bosses when he accused him, without grounds, of having cancelled a journalistic interview with Teddy Hess. Far from being an innocent meeting, that interview had been designed as a trap.

Walter, an undercover CIA agent working jointly with the FBI, had covertly hired Noël as a reporter for a non-existent newspaper, El Frente USA. For six months they paid him a meagre salary in exchange for two articles a week and a video which he himself had to film, edit and upload to social media. Each of the people he interviewed had been contacted beforehand by FBI agents to provoke compromising situations, full of trick questions and rhetorical traps.

The aim was simple: to get Noël to utter some explosive statement against the United States on prickly subjects such as illegal immigration and protest literature. Noël, however, supported every article with genuine, verifiable sources. The case that most infuriated the agencies was his essay on Benjamin Franklin’s impressions of German immigrants, a text that dismantled the untouchable image of the Founding Father.

The essay circulated as a flyer:

A Founding Father Fearful of the Germans

The document is being distributed in full colour at several universities, mainly at the University of Cincinnati.

“Upon investigating we discovered that the surnames of the children most prone to bullying Hispanic pupils were German,” the report notes.

The Germans, in fact, were among the groups most discriminated against at the end of the eighteenth century.

Benjamin Franklin feared that the Germans would outnumber the English-speakers.

The same Founding Father, whose achievements we in no way cease to admire, articulated openly xenophobic fears:

“Soon they will outnumber us,” he wrote, “and all the advantages we have will not be able to preserve our [English] language.”

We should also mention the wave of Southern slaves who, braving numerous dangers, reached Cincinnati in the nineteenth century in search of freedom.

For the agencies, that text was dynamite. Noël quoted authentic documents and cast doubt on the nationalist narrative, precisely when El Frente USA was expecting a shallow, compliant piece from him.

Vanessa turned the page.

Teddy Hess, the report continued, was assistant to Mark Silverman, husband of Yona Santander, Noël’s sister. The marriage had recently ended in a bitter divorce full of threats and lawsuits. Once the interview began, Mr Silverman was to connect furtively to the Zoom session and record his own screen; the simultaneous images of Noël and Hess, carefully edited, would constitute supposed proof of family harassment. With that material, the FBI hoped to justify Noël’s arrest and extradition to the United States on charges of harassment and hate speech.

The ambush collapsed only hours before it was to be carried out. Miraculously—so even the report’s cold language put it—Noël uncovered the trick a bare six hours before the interview, when in the course of his preliminary research he tracked down on the internet a photograph in which Hess and Silverman appeared together. It was an image the FBI believed they had erased from social media. Alarmed, Noël declared himself unfit to conduct the interview alone and suggested that he be accompanied by Milena Barrios, supposedly a remote journalist in Bucaramanga who in fact lived and worked at CIA headquarters in Tampa, Florida.

When Walter later accused him of having abandoned his job, Noël replied calmly:

“I never refused. I merely suggested that the meeting should be attended by another journalist.”

Redhead Walter's rage was extreme. He decided to "teach him a lesson". The next day, under the terms of the contract, El Frente USA was supposed to double Noël's salary to eight hundred dollars a month. Walter and his assistants prepared a half-hour harangue, to end with an ultimatum: if Noël wished to carry on working with them, he would have to be content with his previous pay.

Noël interrupted him after two minutes.

"I know perfectly well what this is about," he said. "Tell me, did a bishop write that speech for you?"

It was a direct reference to the monks of the Pittsburgh abbey, who from the start had denounced him as the Antichrist.

Vanessa underlined that sentence in the margin of the file. She was interested not only in the content but in the tone: there was no fear, but a kind of resigned irony.

The dossier went on:

After being anointed by God in India as a prophet with power to judge the living and the dead—according to his own statements—Noël travelled to the United States in 2012. There he asked the Benedictine monks to receive him as one of their own. The haughty and wealthy clerics took him for a false prophet and, after a mere twelve days, during which they learnt, through a visit from the papal nuncio, of his supposed role in the events of 11 September, they dismissed him, advising him to look for "a more frugal monastery in Colombia".

The taxi slowed as it approached the government complex. Vanessa closed the folder for a moment and drew a deep breath. She knew that the bulk of the story was not in the papers but in the gaps, in the silences and in the coincidences that defied explanation.

She recalled the Mossad report on the video from Raúl's Audi, broadcast simultaneously to various intelligence agencies. From those images, the Israeli analysts had reconstructed the events of that September night.

After meeting at the airport with the so-called Canadian Angel—an Irish hitman whose daughter had taken her own life the day before Noël was to be killed in 2015—and after being picked up in Girón by the Cuban contact, Raúl drove them along the dirt road parallel to the motorway. He boasted of being untouchable thanks to a diabolical pact, while Walter, in the seat beside him, wallowed in violent

thoughts, inhaled to his nose as he imagined how he would smash Noël's jaw, then inhale again and spit out his invectives:

"How dare he raise his voice to me when I asked him to let me speak without interrupting?"

The morbid daydream dissolved when, suddenly, a furious storm erupted over the area, turning the track and the mountainside into a quagmire, precisely at the point where the road reached the bank of the Río de Oro. The sports car's front tyres skidded in a hollow in the dirt road just as a section of the mountainside broke away and slid over the roof above them.

The three assassins screamed in terror as they heard the stones striking and piercing the Audi's bodywork. A boulder tore through the metal panels and crushed Walter's head into the mud, while Raúl's body was ground against the black sands of the riverbank. The live video and audio transmission ended there, with a dry crack.

Raúl's body was recovered the next day on the banks of the Suárez river; the crime section of El Frente presented him as a young man of barely thirty-two. The other bodies never appeared. For the technicians it was an accident; for the religious strategists it was a sign.

The report concluded that the providential character of that disaster appeared to corroborate the warnings of the prophet Noël, who had begun to present himself as the simultaneous incarnation of Petrus Romanus, Joan of Arc and the Risen Jesus.

The taxi stopped in front of the government building. Vanessa put away the folder, took the small box containing the pen and prepared herself for the meeting.

The scene returned again and again to Colonel Preis's mind when, hours later, he met the Prime Minister at his official residence. Vanessa sat opposite them, the dossier open on the table.

"A Catholic who believes in reincarnation and in the simultaneous possession by Jesus?" Colonel Preis had asked sceptically when they first reviewed the videos of Noël.

His free association of gods and religions was, paradoxically, reassuring. There would be no repeat of Guyana or Waco on the deserts of Santander, Vanessa thought. Noël did not look like a suicidal leader but rather like a stubborn mystic and, in his own way, a humourist.

“The attacks on Noël make up a sequence of events you only see in British black comedy,” pronounced Colonel Preis, leafing through the photographs. “It’s always the others who die.”

“He announced that anyone who attacked him would die before they could rise from their chair?” asked the Prime Minister, smoothing his grey hair.

“We’ve already seen the video,” Vanessa put in.

“He could have recorded it days later,” objected the Prime Minister.

“We’ve already verified that it’s genuine,” she replied, without raising her voice.

Colonel Preis turned to the next page.

“The so-called Black Pope ended up threatening him directly,” he added. “Is it true that Noël announced his third assassination attempt on his TikTok account?”

Vanessa nodded briefly.

“The monks of the Left Inquisition are fanatics of the seventies trilogy *The Omen*,” she explained, “known in Spanish as *La Profecía*. They’ve turned that novel into their Bible. At the end of the saga, seven monks receive blessed daggers from the Pope to kill the Antichrist.”

“But the Antichrist...” murmured the Prime Minister.

“Noël Santander is a man leading a quiet life,” Vanessa replied. “What intimidates the Inquisitions is his good fortune, or his divine protection. If it weren’t for common sense, I would say he is the closest thing I know to Dostoevsky’s Prince Myshkin, with the proviso that Santander, far from being an idiot, is a philosopher who can quote Homer and Beckett with equal ease. Right now he’s announcing on his social networks that he’ll go into exile in search of greater religious tolerance.”

“He’s even written that he’ll move to Jerusalem,” Preis interjected.

The Prime Minister leaned back in his chair.

“He has compared himself to Moses,” he said. “But we already know that, faced with the paranormal, one has to be practical, utilitarian. I want Vanessa to travel to Colombia and make contact with him. I want to know whether it suits us to offer him asylum before the Muslims do.”

Vanessa grasped at once the allusion to the Qur’an, which prophesies the return of Jesus to judge the living and the dead according to the surahs’ essential precepts: condemnation of hypocrisy and lies. An ambiguous messiah could become, in others’ hands, an ideological weapon.

“On one occasion Noël claimed to be descended from the Jewish diaspora in Spain,” the Prime Minister went on. “Some people think he might be the Messiah.”

“And the Black Pope?” Preis objected, narrowing the blue of his eyes. “We have information that Benedict XVI is dead and has been secretly embalmed.”

“Francis I will deny what has happened,” said Vanessa. “After the Queen’s death, the Inquisitor deleted his threatening messages. Noël then clarified that the sovereign of the British had perished for not heeding the warnings of Saint Edmond Edmond SJ.”

“What warnings?” asked the Prime Minister.

“That the British Crown should not accept the advice of the Pope and an Italian duke.”

“He’s referring to the alliance between the Vatican and the Freemasons,” the Colonel interjected. “Both, intimidated by the death of the three agents, wanted the British to undertake a new attack on Noël. The Queen agreed, in a fury, despite Noël’s warning that her conspirator would die.”

“He even received a job offer from a British woman,” Vanessa added. “It was, of course, the trap for the third attempt, but Noël turned it down and, as has become his habit, offered healing and forgiveness to the Queen.”

“And there were only two warnings?” insisted the Prime Minister.

Vanessa closed her eyes for a moment, arranging in her mind the sequence of videos Noël Santander had posted.

“He reinforced them through YouTube and Facebook,” she explained. “They underlined the fate of his second attacker.”

“A few hours before the British Queen’s death, yes...” Preis nodded gloomily.

“And the Vatican concealed the death of the retired Pope so that Noël would doubt his own condemnations,” concluded the Prime Minister.

Vanessa hesitated briefly before speaking. She knew that what she was about to say sounded excessive, even here.

“From the moment I’ve known him,” she ventured, “he has had something very close to the gift of omniscience. It’s as if he hears what is being said about him, wherever he may be.”

The Prime Minister rose from his seat and went over to the window. The Tel Aviv sky was beginning to be tinged with yellow glints above the Mediterranean.

“His persecutors have already repented,” he pronounced. “But I know that in Bogotá a new attempt on his life is being prepared with one of the most powerful families of Bucaramanga.”

Vanessa closed the folder and met his gaze.

“If they insist on attacking him,” she said, “they are exposing themselves to a truly sinister moment.”

Logbook of Noël Santander, 9 September 2022

Today, as the attempts on my life continue like an endless procession of shadows, I address these lines to all nations, to all believers and unbelievers of the world, so that together we may build—here and now—the kingdom of heaven on earth: the kingdom of goodness, of God, or of that quantum, secret force of invisible matter which physicists announce on their blackboards as though they were conjuring an ancient psalm.

I write in the half-light of my study. The yellowish glow of an oil lamp mingles with the faint blue radiance that comes in through the window. Outside, the wind drags along a murmur that I cannot tell whether it belongs to the leaves of the guayacan trees or to the footsteps of those who are hunting me. At times I feel my breathing make the flame tremble; at times, something else seems to shake it.

Over two years, the wealthy Inquisition—faceless, clad in a thousand masks, a thousand cassocks, a thousand diplomatic suits—devised two traps to induce me to act rashly. I do not refer in the plural to the two supposed inquisitions that wage war on one another. It is one alone: a two-headed monster that feigns internal disputes, staging a schism useful to the dramaturges of public opinion. Those who know its corridors are aware that the serpent has always had a single venom, no matter how many tongues it flicks.

The first trap was that bogus publishing house which, under the disguise of literary patronage, sought to swindle me. The second was

the fictitious Cincinnati newspaper that laid the subtlest snare: a combination of flattery, espionage and threat. I escaped both at the last minute, like someone dodging the ambush of a predator already scenting blood.

But it was not enough for them.

One night I beheld, in a nightmare, the faces of the thugs who had plotted my downfall. I saw them as though a camera were descending from the sky and revealing the wide shot of a scene already written. I was walking along one of the unpaved roads of the Mesa: a strip of reddish soil twisting between chasms and fields. The air was dense, motionless, and the silence so thick that each of my steps seemed to echo through an underground valley.

Thirty metres ahead of me a man appeared, holding a long machete whose blade caught a shaft of sunlight coming from nowhere. The steel vibrated as if it were breathing. I spun round and saw another figure moving his hands nervously under his poncho, like someone fondling a weapon or muttering a dark prayer. I looked to my right and made out two men whose expressions had been corroded by violence; their eyes did not shine, they absorbed the light.

To my left stretched a rice field over muddy waters. The wind drew slow ripples on the surface, as if a titan were sleeping beneath. It was the best route of escape, though I knew that another killer waited at the far end, where the field gave way to rough ground.

I was surrounded. Then the sky seemed to close in like an iron vault. My heart pounded in my chest like a drum at some ancestral rite.

I had no choice but to flee or die in the attempt. And there, between fear and clarity, I raised my eyes and entrusted myself to Creation. I did not utter a word, but I felt all the night air kneel with me.

I woke up gasping, drenched in cold sweat, my pulse racing as though I were still running. I could still hear the machete cutting through the air.

It was Saturday.

In the early hours of Sunday, while the dream was still trembling in my hands, the conspirators met in secret. They plotted with the local aristocracy, blaming me unjustly for the Queen’s death, and planned my end with former paramilitaries from the Mesa de los

Santos, that holiday-home estate where Bucaramanga's elite throw dinner parties and cover up their sins.

Five ex-paramilitaries agreed to corner me as soon as I set foot on their land. They knew—how, I do not know—that I would travel that weekend with my wife and my mother-in-law. They watched me like ancient hunters studying the deer's path before dawn.

But Creation speaks even to those who deny it.

Before five in the morning, mobile-phone alarms shrieked across Bucaramanga and its surroundings, warning of an imminent earthquake that would destroy the city. The sound was a uniform metallic lament, as though thousands of invisible trumpets were playing at once. There was panic, shouting, weeping, makeshift prayers.

The dogs howled in a way no siren could imitate.

Did they not read in the Bible that where a just man like Lot dwells, no disaster will destroy the city beneath his feet?

But ignorance hardens the heart more than stone.

The conspirators fled in terror along back-roads and through tunnels. As they read these lines—if they are still alive—they know they gave up their attack not out of mercy but out of sheer fear: the dying convulsion of a conspiracy financed by the pious Inquisition, whose gilded temples conceal cellars of fear.

Then what had been foretold came to pass.

The angels at whom the Left-Wing Pope had mocked so often withdrew their aid from him, leaving him at the mercy of the demons his own curses had summoned. I saw him—whether in vision or in memory I cannot say—buckle as if some gigantic hand had broken his spirit. That very day, the Pope collapsed into a wheelchair.

And since then Christendom has been asking itself:

How is it that God leaves His representative on earth in such a state?

The answer is not mine; let each person attend to his conscience.

In spite of that, the Figueras family organised a fourth attempt on my life.

They paid the hitman five million dollars up front. I saw him in my visions: a man with a crooked smile, eyes sunk deep with greed, fingers trembling as they counted the banknotes as though they were stroking snakes. The money became such a burden that he sought to

unload it in the only way he knew: he got drunk and hired two prostitutes before setting out on his exploit.

So busy was the rogue with his tarts that he did not fasten his seat belt. The tiny detail that decides a man's fate is not always some monumental act; sometimes it is an unfastened buckle, a click that never sounds.

The Figueras assassin accelerated into a bend, benumbed by the mixture of drugs, pleasure and drink. The tunnel lights stretched out before him as if the world were a strip of film God was rewinding at full speed.

He gripped the steering wheel.

He laughed.

He drew a deep breath.

He made a swerve that was not his own.

And he crashed into a lighting post.

The impact was instantaneous. The Lamborghini's airbag—that machine built for arrogance—was slower than the collision. The killer's body shattered the safety glass and shot out like a rag doll, to smash against the post's cold metal.

His death was silent; only the echo of the dying engine went on vibrating in the night.

The Lord shows me, through His protection, that I am the end and the beginning of my Church, the Church of Peter the Apostle, not of administrative castles and secret pacts.

I make public my accusation that the Vatican, in concert with the intelligence agencies, persecutes in me a man who preaches nothing but Christ's message: that of universal love, of reconciliation, of a return to the natural order which they call—without understanding it—a solution to climate change.

Yet they feel that, like Savonarola, I threaten the excesses of an institution rotted by glory, money and power, as Saint Francis of Assisi had already denounced in the Middle Ages. They do not understand that it is not a man who challenges them, but their own conscience reflected in a mirror they long to smash.

Today I write these lines so that the record may remain:

I am not afraid of those who persecute me.

I do fear, however, for their souls, which walk in darkness while believing they can see.
—Noël Santander
Bogotá, or future Jerusalem
9 September 2022



22. Petrus Romanus

Logbook of Noël Santander, 2 October 2022

Around mid-December 2019, before the pandemic, I dreamt that a conflagration caused by the heat of the sun was melting entire regions of the planet. It was no metaphor: I saw cities whose buildings bent like tallow candles, motorways softening and swallowing cars, oceans boiling like immense cauldrons where, tiny as insects, the vessels of empires floated helplessly.

My wife Leyla and I ascended into an aeroplane that lifted us above the other nations. It was not a commercial flight; rather, a silent, white craft with no logos, waiting on a secluded runway. When we boarded, I knew—without anyone telling me—that it was a new Ark: the Ark of Love. Not made of wood, but of wisdom.

At first no one paid attention to us. From the windows we saw people wandering the runways, busy with luggage, mobile phones, and their usual errands. But as the conflagration advanced—sudden droughts on some continents, tornadoes on others, pandemics, freezes, and tidal waves—they began to notice that our craft remained intact, suspended at a safe height while everything around turned uninhabitable. Then they raised their faces towards us, and entire multitudes begged us to bless them and to let them aboard.

The scene later reminded me of the stories of Stalingrad I had heard in newsreels as a child: the last planes taking off while those left behind knew they were signing their sentence. The impulse of the multitudes was not devotion, but survival. Whoever managed to board, whoever convinced the pilot, whoever behaved “best”, would live.

Yet in the dream Leyla and I knew that everyone fit. This craft had no limit of weight or seats: it was wisdom itself, the acknowledgement of immortality, the renunciation of the terror of death instilled by those who kill, steal, and rule through fear. Our wish was to descend, open the doors, and tell them: “Come aboard. This Ark of Love is for all who accept that life does not end in the grave.”

In the light of my past I know that the vessel symbolises the wisdom contained in my books: precepts as ancient as humanity, which have allowed us to survive throughout life amid the climate change caused by the beast 666 (hatred—money, megalomania—power, and vanity—fame).

The conflagration provoked by this three-headed beast, better described in the Apocalypse of Saint John than in the IPCC reports, is the one that afflicts the world today. That some artists present it under black-comedy tones—Inspector Clouseau, Mr Bean heir to the throne—does not make it any less real. On the contrary: they announce, unwittingly, the arrival of a prophet who survives without being aggressive or murderous, protected only by goodness and by a fortune that infuriates the powerful. Those who mock such a prophet resemble Inspector Dreyfus: they feel incapacitated, furious, and eventually driven mad when, time and again, despite their plans, the innocent one emerges unharmed and they themselves end up mutilated by their own hatred.

I feel no guilt, no pride, no relief, no fear when contemplating these visions. Only presence. A prophet is not here to dramatise his feelings, but to assume a mission. If God entrusts him with it, it is because He has seen in him the necessary character. What is difficult is not the vision but mastering impatience at the sins of others, restraining the vice of wanting to excise error with a machete. The prophet must learn to correct without hatred, to denounce without vengeance.

I correct here a manuscript altered by spies of the Inquisition, those who, at the beginning of September this year, I also confronted and defeated in a Rome already crumbling before these pages. I saw them sitting in cafés near Piazza Navona, disguised as tourists, editing proofs in which they mutilated my words. They believed that by softening certain verbs and erasing a few names they would appease the anger of their paymasters. They ignore that once the Word is spoken, it no longer belongs to them.

On 1 September the Lord revealed to me that I am the reincarnation of Peter the Roman, the first and last vicar of His Church, prey to persecutions, as I wrote in the eleventh chant of King of Kings:

King of Kings – Eleventh Chant – “My Faith Is from My Beginnings”

*My faith has been with me since the beginning
In another life, I was Peter the Apostle
The one who denied Jesus three times
By Jehovah, there will not be a fourth*

*The Lord gave me the sacred keys,
Of heaven, earth, and hell,
To judge with divine justice,
As the spokesperson of the King of Kings.*

*Look at what they’ve done to my Church!
It was in 2013 that the Lord, weeping,
Told me the Pope no longer believed in God
And sent me to Pittsburgh to announce it.*

*Ratzinger had the nobility to resign
To spare his people from God’s wrath
But he took refuge in a masquerade
Does he not read that God sees all?*

*The seven hills of Rome shall fall
Before the terrible Judgment of the Most Just,
He whom they planned to defeat with lies,
With wickedness, now buried today.*

On that same day, 1 September, while fleeing the dangers described in the previous chapter, the Lord spoke to me with the clarity one experiences once or twice in a lifetime. I was walking with my heart racing, measuring the distance to the next exit, rehearsing escape routes, when the inner voice rose above the noise of the world:

“You I have chosen because you will not deny Me a fourth time.”

In that instant I understood. Not only because of the present persecutions, but because of a dream from my adolescence which I had until then considered a pious recollection without further consequence.

In that youthful dream I walked through a luminous courtyard. Jesus approached me with a serene smile. I was immensely happy to see Him; I felt the joy of a child returned to his father after a war. When He stood before me, He said, with firm but reproachless voice:

“You will deny Me.”

I replied, scandalised:

“No, Lord, impossible.”

I awoke with the same mixture of joy and bewilderment. I had seen Jesus, yet His words wounded me. I told the dream to a devout aunt who only said, “Perhaps it is a warning for you to be strong when

the hour comes.” For years I forgot it.

Now I understood. I had already denied Him three times—not with open blasphemies but with fear: fear of death, fear of ridicule, fear of being thought mad. Three concrete moments in which, for fear of losing life or prestige, I silenced the truth given to me. There will be no fourth time.

For more than eleven years I have endured in silence with

my flock—the just men and women of good heart who refuse to kill, even in self-defence—the humility demanded by the Church of its saints and prophets. I kept silent until the moment came to publish these texts, which began to emerge during the pandemic. It is they who have unleashed the fury of the assassins, the Illuminati, the agencies that lend themselves to be their instruments.

The agencies are, in truth, no more than intermediate offices. The true owners of power operate behind the curtains. Not even they dare to admit that they are persecuting a prophet, for such an



admission would spark international interest they could not contain. Hence their strategy is always silent censorship: anonymous reports on social media, algorithms that hide my posts, contracts broken without explanation. What maddens them is that all who participate in that censorship—those who sign, those who give the order, those who write the code—fall ill, suffer accidents, or endure inexplicable losses. But they are so attached to the world that they accept these misfortunes as “part of the job” and persevere, convinced they defend “order.”

Brief, almost involuntary autobiography of a man governed by love and goodness in all circles of the world.

And love and goodness are the substance of the gods who also dwell in me: Shiva, Messiah, Buddha, Confucius, Joan of Arc, Baruch Spinoza, Joseph—sold by his brothers—Kali, and all gods and saints of good intentions. Each occupies a distinct chamber in my soul: Shiva, the fire that destroys to purify; Buddha, the listening silence; Joan of Arc, the adolescent courage that asks no permission; Spinoza, the reason that kneels before no bribe; Joseph, the betrayed patience that ends by saving its betrayers.

Who draws near to God, like God, is all. He who withdraws from Him is reduced to his ego and the sufferings that solitude engenders, so sharply captured by Martin Heidegger and Jean-Paul Sartre⁷. Being asked about a reader about the reasons I had read so much, I answered her that I have no need to justify that I have read them; it is the ignorant who must justify his indolence. Reading is what makes us truly human.

Like Job, the Lord tells me, I am the righteous man slapped seventy times seven who sustains a literary and cinematographic work free and fearless of expressing universal certainties. Those who attacked me suffer defeats they cannot comprehend and ask themselves: “Then is it true that spiritual forces protect the just?”

For decades I have begged the Lord to restrain His wrath, but the natural catastrophes that devastate us—the so-called climate change—are attributed exclusively to industrial carbon monoxide. The “evidence” of the experts, who alter their models every few years,

⁷ God is the Being who knows the universe from all possible existences. To understand this ontology, I refer the reader to my book “Being God: Global Metaphysics” (Santaley, 2024).

cracks when they look at the map: climatic oscillation strikes chiefly the northern hemisphere while official discourse insists on uniform catastrophe. In recent years, moreover, their predictions have cooled along with the temperatures, and those who heralded imminent deluge—Gore, Gingrich, and their epigones—have become millionaires' clowns. Bankers know it well: if the sea were about to swallow Miami, no sensible fund would lend millions for beach-front towers.

I announce that climate change will wane as this message spreads, for the wellbeing of His flock. One day I shall recount how, in La Coruña, the Lord allowed me to intervene directly in that balance.

Anointed by Jesus, King of Kings, I shall be, like Dante in his Comedy, judge of the living and the dead throughout these chronicles of my spiritual life. Not a judge who condemns capriciously, but one who shows every soul its own face so that it may choose whether to continue inhabiting it.

So that souls more hopeful may build the kingdom of goodness as a united community of God's children, equals without fear of an illusory end.

Vanessa Cañas parked her Peugeot beside the Parque de las Palmas, a green block surrounded by twenty-storey towers whose glass reflected a still-gentle sun. The air smelt of hot bread and exhaust fumes. A distant speaker played an old cumbia; on the corner a phone-minutes vendor shouted offers while an elderly woman dragged her shopping trolley. The soft breeze rustling the coastal palms brushed Vanessa's cheeks, and for a moment she felt she had returned to a city that remained the same and yet no longer expected her.

She crossed the street, dodging a motorbike, and entered a breakfast shop with a terrace facing the park: Pan Pa' Ya. Inside was a mix of stainless-steel display cases, steaming trays of pan de yuca, glossy buñuelos, and formica tables occupied by families, early workers, and two students with laptops. A television in the corner spat breaking news about Ukraine, missiles, and sanctions.

Noël Santander greeted her with an embrace at the edge of the terrace.

"Such a long time!" he exclaimed, with the same smile he had twenty-five years ago. "I was just reading some columnists. Did you read about the public employee who murdered his daughter to get back at his ex-wife?"

Vanessa caught the scent of ink and cheap soap on Noël's shirt, and a surge of nostalgia crossed her chest.

"I barely had time to sleep in Bogotá," she excused herself, placing her bag on the plastic chair. "The transfer was madness."

A waiter approached with two trays and served them each a bowl of rib broth with pan de yuca and freshly fried buñuelos. A fragrant cloud of steam rose.

"I took the liberty of ordering your breakfast," Noël said. "I hope you haven't become a vegetarian."

Vanessa shook her head with a smile that blended gratitude and professional reserve.

"No chance."

She took the spoon, tasted the broth: soft, not too salty, perfectly rich. For a second, the flavour carried her back to university mornings in Philadelphia, to student cafeterias where everything tasted like cardboard.

"We're worried about threats of a third world war," she said, slipping into report tone.

"Neither the Tsar of Russia nor the leader of the United States will be able to launch a nuclear missile," he answered as if commenting on a football match.

Vanessa looked up. Behind him the television showed tanks advancing across snow.

"Is there something preventing them?" she asked craftily.

"Whoever decides to do so will die before taking the first step," Noël replied. "Haven't you read my logbook?"

"Some of it," Vanessa admitted, feeling her cheeks warm. "As I told the members of our university WhatsApp group when you left, one must learn that there's a difference between the real and reality..."

She referred to the night of 6 September. When Noël announced in the chat that international agents wanted to eliminate him, replies poured in: laughing emojis, Mr Bean memes holding bombs, photoshopped posters of Inspector Clouseau shooting himself in the foot. Martha sent a picture of a tinfoil hat with the

caption “basic prophet kit.” Others, crueller, asked if he had already booked a seat on Noah’s Ark.

Vanessa, uneasy, had intervened with a long message few bothered to read: “There is religious experience, there is personal interpretation, and there are also verifiable facts. It helps to distinguish.” Minutes later Noël left the group without a word.

“As I wrote them,” Vanessa continued now, stirring the broth, “you have, first, academic knowledge about religious experience; second, you believe what happened to you was real; and third, there is evidence for what you write.”

Noël meditated for several seconds, gazing into the broth as if reading the swirls of fat.

“I never thought my own friends would betray me for an American visa,” he said at last.

“If people here kill for a hundred thousand pesos,” she replied, shrugging, “imagine what they’ll do for a green card.”

Noël nodded, absorbed in memories of his past with Martha and Vanessa, companions in their Temple University residence hall. Martha was chubby, long-faced, and pretentious, jealous of anyone who outshone her precarious talents; Vanessa was sweet, ironic, receptive, and possessed that rare gift of giving everyone the feeling they were right without yielding her own judgement.

He recalled an afternoon on the embankment overlooking the university theatre. Martha had said, shrugging:

“Almost my entire family was murdered in Austria under the Nazis. They exterminated us.”

Noël told her that his ancestors had also been Jewish, that his second surname—Ferreira—meant “smith” in Portuguese. Those present, shaped by fashionable stereotypes, understood immediately. That a Hispanic man should be a voracious reader did not fit their mould; but if he were of Jewish descent, the anomaly was “explained.”

“You bother a lot of people when you say certain government agencies are after you,” Vanessa said suddenly, driven by a mix of affection and professional mandate.

Noël raised his eyebrows, genuinely surprised. For a moment she wondered if she were witnessing one of his performances.

“Really?” he replied. “The truth is that God protects each one of us every day. Why do most people fear trusting in the supremacy of love and goodness?”

Vanessa thought of the reports she had read in Tel Aviv, the watermarked folders, the satellite images of the estoraques trail. She simply took a buñuelo.

“What have you thought about my proposal?” she asked, finally entering the point of her visit.

“It could be,” Noël said. “But a hundred words for two dollars is little. I want us to discuss that before starting; I’ve had problems with ambiguous agreements before. I refer to El Frente USA.”

“How much do you want?” Vanessa cut in, aware that her phone’s recorder was running inside her bag.

“I read that five dollars is the right amount...” Noël murmured, as if quoting an academic source.

Vanessa did a quick mental calculation. The private club in Tel Aviv could afford it; besides, the figure would reassure the prophet and, with luck, keep him writing for them rather than for some capricious emir.

“Agreed,” she said at last. “As I’ve mentioned, they are for a magazine of a private club in Tel Aviv.”

“Only about my mystical experiences?”

“You may also write essays and parables,” she added. “We want around thirty articles before the end of the year.”

Vanessa did not confess that behind the magazine were readers quite different from the club’s members: analysts, rabbis, retired officers, an occasional curious banker. Nor did she admit that, hearing Noël speak of missiles impossible to fire and climate change halted by intercession, she sometimes felt like Inspector Dreyfus watching, helpless, how the world bent in Clouseau’s favour.

Noël, on the other hand, seemed at peace. He held the spoon as one holds a pen. Behind him, on the television, a commentator shouted that the world was heading for disaster. He smiled faintly and murmured:

“Everyone fits on the aeroplane, Vanessa. The difficult part is convincing them to get on.”



23. The essay that enraged Britain's rulers

“Tsunami Lessons” (2005) is a short journalistic article in which I outline ideas of planetary equality that deeply irritate the mere 7% who hoard the world’s resources: the caste that directs not only capital, but the global petite bourgeoisie, the educated minority who constitute barely 20% of humanity.

That 20%, convinced it is free, fulfils—unknowingly—the same role overseers once played for slave owners in the American South: obedient administrators of someone else’s suffering. Living in London, at the heart of the financial Empire, I saw daily the invisible gears of that system: executives who spoke of philanthropy while dismissing staff; newspapers that published tragedies only when convenient; priests who blessed the rich and regarded immigrants with suspicion. From within, I better understood the metaphor of Pharaoh: no whip is needed when the overseers smile.

You and I also belong to that group of bishops and knights, dear reader. Through our conformity, through our silence, we end up approving—whether we like it or not—wars, hunger and suffering inflicted upon the other 73% of the planet.

I wrote “Tsunami Lessons” in London, while working at Harrods—three days a week—and dedicating the remaining four to reading and writing. I published the essay in English, on HugoSantander.com, and sent it to a mailing list of British academics. It was a strange era: writing on the internet was still seen as an eccentricity; printed newspapers dictated the canon, and sincere opinion rarely found an echo. I believed—naively—that honest words could wake someone amidst so much hollow speech.

No one replied. No institution issued a formal complaint. But the Lord revealed to me later that the text had indeed been read by the circles surrounding the Crown, and that they had found it offensive: a foreigner pointing at the moral hypocrisy of the Empire.

The signs of their resentment began to fall like drops of humidity before a major leak. Every time I left the country and

returned, my suitcases disappeared for two or three days; when they finally arrived, they had been ransacked, objects broken, notebooks palpated as if searching for explosives. One afternoon a man in a dark suit and military haircut approached me in the street with a timid smile: the kind of spy incapable of feigning naturalness. Soon after, a wave of “admirers” wrote to me—women who wished to meet, with photographs too perfect to trust. It was the theatre of operative seduction.

I archived the essay in my memory until today, when I republish it in the wake of the chain of attacks that the Holy Spirit defeated one by one. God’s patience—so I learnt—was reaching its limit. Those who conspired against the just would reap what they had sown. And that warning arrived shortly before the death of the Queen of the Celts, whom they were persuading to authorise a third attempt on my life.

I had not known that the British were pursuing me. I learnt later that they had planned to eliminate me on 7 July 2005 because of this essay, published then on my webpage.

I transcribe it here as it was written:

Tsunami Lessons

Two years after the events of 11 September, another disaster—this time caused by what the intellectual class of our era calls “nature”—has destroyed some of the favourite tourist attractions of the East.



As a result, several of our most influential rulers and bankers have proclaimed the beginning of a new era, in which the economic measures that have guaranteed misery and exploitation for the poor will supposedly be abolished.

Their well-advertised philanthropy contrasts starkly with the selfish mood recorded in Washington only hours before the tsunami.

On 23 December, Elizabeth Becker of *The New York Times* quoted certain members of the administration who told her that the food-aid budget for the fiscal year beginning 1 October was at least \$600 million short of what charitable organisations and aid agencies needed to maintain their current programmes.

As a consequence, organisations such as Catholic Relief Services were forced to cut programmes in Malawi, Madagascar and Indonesia.

The unprecedented solidarity shown by the G-8 towards the victims of the tsunami in recent weeks is not due primarily to the attention their suffering has drawn in the Western media, but rather to the unusual fact that their tragedy was shared by some three thousand citizens of the most prosperous nations on Earth.

The waves of the tsunami could not distinguish between locals and Europeans, credit-card holders and underpaid workers, tourists and servants, orphans and child abusers. Death imposed its overwhelming certainty upon both those educated in the privilege of living in the richest and safest nations of the world, and those who struggled under the constant threat of hunger, humiliation and uncertainty.

It is no coincidence that a British journalist caught up in the disaster described the attitude of the Asian media as “stoic”, unable as she was to comprehend the resignation of a people far too familiar with death—she herself, like many journalists, not remembering the 138,000 who perished in the 1991 tsunami in Bangladesh.

As in the earthquake and tsunami of 1755 that destroyed the city of Lisbon, various writers have raised the question of the possibility or impossibility of a punitive God. These speculations, already debated by Voltaire and Rousseau,

are more indicative of a growing sense of guilt among Western journalists.

For decades, the coastline of Indonesia, Thailand and eastern India has been denounced as a major centre of child prostitution and pornography. According to the U.S. State Department's 2004 Trafficking in Persons Report, Sri Lanka, Indonesia and Thailand are "countries of origin, transit and destination for trafficked persons for the purpose of sexual exploitation."

Andrea Bertone, director of HumanTrafficking.org, reports that "in these areas there may be child-sex tourists who come on holiday, situational child-sex tourists, or paedophiles who may actually live in the area."

Only days after the tsunami, a UNICEF official reported having received an unsolicited text message asking what kind of child he would prefer.

Once again, the universe has underlined our fragility. *In vain we seem great*, writes the Portuguese poet Fernando Pessoa, for in the face of destruction and decay we have learnt to lament the certainty of death rather than celebrate the miracle of living:

*The sea lies; the winds moan in secret
Imprisoned in Aeolus;
Only, with the tips of his trident, the vast
Waters does Neptune furrow;*

*And the white shore fills with small
Glints beneath the dazzling sun.
In vain we seem great.
Nothing in the distant world*

*Recognises in our greatness our gaze
Or rightly serves us.
If here, from a gentle sea, I glimpse my depths*

*Three waves erase them,
What will the sea do to me upon the beach,
Echo of Saturn?*

London, 6 January 2005

Uncomfortable truths that deeply offended the powerful figures surrounding the British Crown. The plan to kill me was born then, and their first attempt occurred as I returned from the funeral of my ex-wife's grandfather, Ulises Dupont, in June 2005.

After crossing the Channel, passengers disembarked into a vast subterranean hall. It was a long, immaculate corridor, with high ceilings like a backstage tunnel in a theatre: a stage where every figure seemed an actor awaiting his cue.

"Step aside, sir," a gendarme ordered, nodding towards a man in a dark suit who stood waiting several metres away.

The agent had a military haircut, a soldier's jawline, and a face so neutral it seemed designed to be forgotten. I walked towards him. Michelle remained a few steps back, frowning.

"Passport," he said curtly.

I handed it over.

"You have the face of a terrorist, sir," he declared, without a flicker of humour.

I drew breath.

"Yes, I know. They often take me for Pakistani or Arab," I replied with a British smile—humour as shield.

He did not smile.

The questioning began—unnervingly gratuitous:

"Where are you from?"

"From Bucaramanga, Colombia."

"Is that your village?"

"It is a city. We have cities too, you know."

"Village or city, same thing. And what do you do for a living?"

"I work at Harrods."

"Which department?"

"Children's haute couture."

"Expensive clothes, aren't they?"

While he spoke, I saw Michelle in the distance confronting the other gendarme, pointing towards me. Later I learnt she demanded explanations: she refused to move.

The agent—whom I mentally christened Johnny English—leafed through my passport as if assessing a defective item.

When he finally returned it, I said:

"I'm glad to have been the chosen one."

"I'm sure you didn't mean that, sir," he replied icily.

We walked away. But I knew I had not truly walked away.

From that day forward I felt the city watching me. And London, with its elegant dampness, is a perfect theatre for shadows. Hyde Park, where I walked each morning on my way to Harrods, became both refuge and stage. Sometimes I marvelled at the Italian gardens;



other times a repeated silhouette in different paths made me suspect I was being followed.

In Baker Street I read *The Guardian*, *Le Monde*, *Frankfurter Allgemeine*, imagining that the bronze detective on the corner—Sherlock Holmes—might be the only soul capable of believing my story.

We attended a nearby Roman Catholic parish, where the arriviste priest always avoided us: we were immigrants, and not wealthy. A Latin Mass confirmed his disdain. I whispered something to Michelle in French, and an elderly man turned abruptly:

"Quare loquuntur in domo Domini?"

I answered in English. He turned back, chastened. In London, appearance reigns more than charity.

The irony was bitter: I caught a pregnant woman mid-fall in the metro, yet the act was met with confusion rather than gratitude. She left silently, and another passenger commented on the novelty of a 'white thief.' In this city, kindness is viewed with suspicion, and stereotypes override reality.

Meanwhile, the "admirer" insisted on meeting. Her photograph—perfect, luminous—had the unreality of a mask. We scheduled a meeting for the morning of 7 July 2005.

The night before, sleep eluded me. In Bucaramanga, my father Hugo dreamt that three enraged bulls chased me through the streets of London. That dream would later prove the key that fits every lock.

When the phone rang, I was still at home.

"I changed my mind," I said.

"Very well," replied the voice, cold as glass.

Minutes later, the London bombings began.

Trained in documentary work at Temple University, I took my digital camera and went out to film. I recorded couples embracing too tightly, halted buses, wandering gazes. London transformed into a stage of quiet terror.

Upon returning home, I knew it at once:

someone had entered.

Drawers ajar. Papers disturbed. A notebook examined. And on the shelf, a religious icon turned upside down—as though someone had touched my forehead with an icy finger. It was not theft; it was a message.

A symbolic violation: for them, I was a spiritual enemy.

Jean Charles de Menezes — *The Mortal Mirror*

Weeks later, two streets from home, at Marble Arch, police officers executed a young Brazilian man, my age, my build, my features.

When I saw his photograph, a shock ran through me. It was as though I were looking at my own corpse published by mistake—an alternative version of myself, killed in my stead.

This moment is the heart of the chapter:
the brutal certainty that the world had aimed at me and missed by millimetres.

Then the admirer rang again:

“Let’s reschedule our meeting.”

“No, thank you.”

“Why?”

“A man has been killed.”

“Are you afraid because of one dead man?”

“Yes. I am.”

She hung up. She never called again.

International indignation over the death of Menezes forced official inquiries and cooled the waters for a time. Yet the pressure remained: surveillance, silence, ransacked luggage, clerical suspicion, the sense of being trapped inside the very system I had denounced in “Tsunami Lessons”.

In November that year, I boarded a flight to Bucaramanga. As the plane rose, I understood the inevitability of my departure: one cannot remain forever in Pharaoh’s estate once one has seen how the whip is wielded.

My exile from London was a loss, for as Doctor Johnson proclaimed, *he who is tired of London is tired of life*. Far from being weary of it, I loved the city for its theatrical performances, which I had the chance to watch almost every day during my years there. But leaving became the logical conclusion of what I had written at the beginning: if a man refuses to serve as an overseer of the system, the system will attempt to destroy him.

If not in this life, I am certain that I shall return to London—this time as the respected gentleman I always was.

24. The Prophetic Purpose of Fiction

Our generation reacts to natural disasters with the same nonchalance as the ancient inhabitants of Pompeii. Sceptical of the fatal consequences of the eruption of Vesuvius, the majority of upper-class citizens chose to remain in the city.

The rain of hot stones appeared benign according to their perception; their palaces and baths represented, according to their common sense, solid refuges. A mass of pitch and ash fell from the sky, destroying them instantaneously and preserving them for posterity.

The ruins of Pompeii and its carbonised inhabitants today reveal a slave-holding society that lived with cruelty.

According to the occult sciences, every city is destroyed by abandoning love and goodness; the Romans, the Aztecs, the Napoleonic empires and the Germans constitute a succession of the same *hamartia*.

As Isaac Asimov expresses in his history of Egypt, traditional historians have perceived signs of decline in the cessation of military activity, whereas our sensitivities point instead towards civilisation and progress.

Pompeii remains as a petrified lamp. Ash, as it fell, acted as a mould; time, as it passed, acted as a museum; and the modern eye, as it looks, acts as a judge. This triple operation turns Pompeii into an allegory of every age that confuses stability with



eternity. There, in streets that are still legible, human confidence appears placed in the wall, in the stone, in the vault. The well-to-do citizen believed he inhabited a fortress. Marble seemed like a promise and the column seemed like destiny, while the public bath appeared as invulnerable civilisation. Vesuvius turned that confidence into a lesson written in pitch.

Prophetic fiction is born of such allegories. Prophecy, in its classical form, offers images that traversed generations: a valley of bones, a city in flames, a sea that parts, a balance, a seal, a trumpet. The impositions of positivism have turned those revelations into hyperboles, or at most into symbols filtered through sophisticated theologians, yet each one survives intact as prophetic fiction — that is, as plausible narrative, though not verifiable. Sacred myth thus preserves its impulse as paradigm: it presents us with a historical narrative, as questionable as any written history, as historiography dictates, and turns it into a mirror of the present.

One of Joseph Campbell's great merits consists in having shown that modern fictional narratives fulfil, without explicit religious aspiration, the function that prophetic accounts performed for millennia. This function unfolds from human psychology and from inner experience. In an age that privileges the autonomy of consciousness, myth reappears as a living structure of meaning. Growing up requires a model narrative, a symbolic map that guides one through the labyrinth of existence in the same way that Ariadne's thread guided Theseus towards exit and victory. That thread grants orientation, continuity and purpose to the vital journey.

The archetypes that Jung identified in the collective psyche, and which for centuries were expressed in the Scriptures, continue to act today through secular narrative forms. Where Genesis recounts the origin of the world and the drama of consciousness, contemporary sagas such as *Star Wars* articulate the same conflict in a language attuned to modern sensibility. Myth persists as a constant translation of fundamental human experience.

Genesis opens with a creative principle that orders chaos, separates light from darkness and confers meaning upon the cosmos. In *Star Wars*, that principle manifests as the Force: an energy that permeates all things and sustains the balance of the universe. In both narratives, creation acquires symbolic value: the establishment of meaning in the face of primordial indistinction. The biblical Logos

and the cinematic Force fulfil an analogous function as the foundation of order.

From that origin emerges a central tension between light and darkness, between harmony and dissolution. This duality expresses an inner dynamic of consciousness. The serpent of Eden and the dark side of the Force represent the same ambiguity: the capacity to divert desire through promises of immediate fulfilment. Conflict arises when aspiration towards the good loses inner coherence.

Both narratives evoke an original state of harmony. The biblical Eden finds its symbolic correspondence in the Galactic Republic prior to its corruption. This ideal past acts as an axial reference: something essential fractures, and history unfolds as a response to that fracture. The fall arises from the longing for dominion, knowledge or power without ethical integration. Adam and Anakin Skywalker thus embody the figure of the Chosen One, who concentrates collective destiny and stretches it to the limit.

The figure of the fallen father then acquires centrality. Adam transmits to humanity an original wound; Darth Vader embodies deviated authority that demands reconciliation. Myth introduces the son as restorative agent. Luke Skywalker, like the latent messianic figures of the biblical narrative, restores the original bond through fidelity to inner good. The decisive revelation — "I am your father" — fulfils the function of a transformative truth that reconfigures identity and orients destiny.

The path towards that integration is expressed as exile and journey. Expulsion from Eden and Luke's departure from Tatooine symbolise the necessity of abandoning initial security in order to unfold maturity. The journey entails trial, discipline and inner confrontation. For this reason myth introduces the figure of the luminous mentor: the instructing God, the wise elder, Obi-Wan, Yoda. The master orients, awakens and strengthens the hero's freedom.

The culmination of the narrative manifests as integration and restoration. Vader's final sacrifice and the biblical promise of renewal express the same intuition: order is restored when the shadow is recognised and transformed. Myth teaches that redemption occurs as an inner act with universal resonance.

Thus *Star Wars* prolongs Genesis in a new symbolic language. While the Bible is presented as obsolete for appearing, according to

its exegetes, in a supposedly theological key, cinema reveals that the essential key of all narrative is psychological; the essential journey remains.

Narrative traverses modernity as a renewed form of prophecy. In that displacement, it continues to offer each generation an image of itself oriented towards goodness, consciousness and reconciliation. Where information dissolves into figures, fiction restores meaning.

In *The Last Days of Pompeii*, volcanic ash becomes a mirror of contemporary concrete. The illusion of refuge offered by solid Roman constructions is reflected today in the economy of insurance, in glass towers and in investment funds that promise shielding against disaster. The nonchalance of the Pompeian elite finds its equivalent in the serenity with which modern consciousness consumes headlines about earthquakes, floods, forest fires, hurricanes, wars, dam collapses or mass migrations. One observes, comments, shares and turns the page. If humanity learns slowly when the lesson presents itself as a statistic, its learning becomes immediate when that lesson adopts the form of apocalyptic narrative.

The prophetic purpose of fiction therefore consists in transforming wisdom into presence. Numbers inform with precision, but they do not move. Graphs persuade the mind; the character persuades the soul. Statistics describe; the scene reveals. News enumerates; the novel incarnates. Science offers causality; fiction offers meaning. And that meaning, transmitted by the novel, the short story, theatre or cinema, acts as a moral compass.

Bulwer-Lytton turns historical erudition into an ethical instrument and shows how Rome's technical grandeur coexisted with a profound social fracture. His command of classical sources, of Roman daily life and of the mentality of the first century AD is manifested in scenes where beauty and cruelty intertwine without concealment.

A first example appears in the description of Pompeian houses. The author recreates with archaeological meticulousness frescoes, mosaics, luminous peristyles and refined triclinia. The reader perceives the aesthetic taste of the elite and the author's architectural knowledge. However, those same houses are traversed by the silent presence of slaves: figures who serve wine, prepare banquets and sustain the leisure of their masters. Luxury does not conceal the chain: it makes it evident.

Another decisive example is found in the social and festive life of Pompeii. Banquets, public performances and private celebrations display a society devoted to pleasure, rhetorical wit and intellectual refinement. Cultivated characters quote poets and discuss philosophy, yet beneath that elegant surface domestic fear pulses: fear of punishment, of latent rebellion, of a normalised everyday violence. Festivity coexists with constant tension, as though civilisation intuited that its order rests upon structural injustice.

The figure of Arbaces, the Egyptian priest, condenses this degradation. In him are embodied religious cynicism and the instrumentalisation of spiritual power in a society that has emptied its sacred forms of ethical content. Bulwer-Lytton thus dramatises the moral decadence described by Juvenal or Tacitus: religion survives as spectacle and mechanism of control, while compassion and justice lose centrality. Intellectual refinement coexists with calculated cruelty.

The same logic reveals itself in the treatment of spectacle and violence. References to the games, to the taste for the suffering of others, and to indifference towards death portray a Rome that is technically advanced and aesthetically sophisticated, yet morally eroded. Aesthetic pleasure and horror do not exclude one another; they reinforce one another in daily life.

For this reason, when catastrophe arrives, it does not present itself solely as a natural phenomenon, but as metaphysical revelation. The ash of Vesuvius tears away the rhetorical veil of imperial grandeur and exposes the structural truth of the city. Carbonised bodies, buried houses and objects frozen in time reveal a slave-holding society, cruel and incapable of ethically sustaining the splendour it had attained. Ruin says what the discourse of power concealed.

Pompeii thus becomes a paradigm: a civilisation in which poetry, luxury and technique coexist with chains, fear and dehumanisation. Bulwer-Lytton succeeds in making the novel transcend historical narrative and function as a moral diagnosis of any culture that reaches external splendour while neglecting its ethical centre.

Towards a Mature Civilisation

Sapiential and occult traditions have conceived the city as a spiritual organism subject to metaphysical laws that go beyond the

merely juridical. Hermeticism affirmed that there exists a constant correspondence between the invisible and the visible: when the collective soul becomes disordered, external forms lose coherence. A city may preserve codes, institutions and discourses of legality, and yet have eroded its moral intelligence.

Mundane astrology, devoted to the study of kingdoms and communities, spoke of ethical climates. When a society tolerates injustice and normalises impunity, that climate grows denser. The emergence of crime then appears not as an anomaly, but as a manifestation. The upright citizen begins to become inconvenient; the transgressor adapts better to the new equilibrium. Moral inversion always precedes structural crisis.



Kabbalah described this process as a fracture of the common vessel. Where compassion cools and the law separates itself from mercy, vital flow is interrupted. The city loses its ear for warning and confuses punishment with justice, cunning with virtue. Correction then arrives not as vengeance, but as *tikkun*: an attempt to restore deep order.

Historical Gnosticism interpreted these dynamics as a hardening of power. When authority absolutises itself, it persecutes that which still remembers the good. The just person is a nuisance because he reveals; the corrupt person blends in because he confirms the system. It is not the absence of norms that favours decadence, but the loss of their meaning.

Spiritual alchemy called this state *putrefactio*: not as condemnation, but as the phase prior to every transformation. When money becomes the supreme value and power the ultimate end, the

urban organism develops fever. Violence, lying and impunity are not first causes, but symptoms of a prior degradation of the collective heart.

Emanuel Swedenborg formulated this law with particular clarity. According to his visions, infernal societies receive governors in keeping with their spiritual state. The more love of the good and of truth is corrupted among citizens, the more it is permitted that power be exercised by figures who reflect that disorder. The evil ruler thus appears not only as an injustice imposed from without, but as a mirror of the dominant moral climate. A corrupt and bloodthirsty president who governs a nation is not a divine punishment, but a scourge imposed in order to control the majority of its citizens who are equally corrupt and murderous.

Greek tragedians named this deviation with the term *hamartia*: the arrogance of the ruler who attributes to himself an excessive authority. Power is then conceived as licence to humiliate, silence or kill, under the conviction of occupying a plane superior to the moral order.

Before Oedipus, Athens had already manifested a decisive civic indolence. The city had consented to the sacrifice of innocents to the Effigy, accepting the ritual transfer of collective guilt. That gesture made it possible to preserve the appearance of order while violence became institutionalised. The community learned to coexist with injustice whenever it adopted a symbolic and regulated form.

Upon that ground Oedipus emerges. His authority encounters a polis accustomed to displacing responsibility. In *Oedipus Rex*, *hamartia* is expressed when he exercises violence against Laius and when he discredits Tiresias for stating the truth. Abuse of power appears as the prolongation of a prior civic pedagogy: the ruler acts in accordance with what the city has learned to tolerate.

The king's deviation is then projected onto the political body. The injustice exercised from the summit of power is translated into corruption of the common air. The plague that ravages Athens reveals the continuity between social indolence, abuse of authority and collective disorder. The evil that afflicts the city condenses a prior chain of moral concessions.

Tragedy thus shows a severe law: when the community accepts the sacrifice of the innocent, power learns to exercise violence; when power overflows, the city falls ill. *Hamartia* manifests itself as a shared

gesture, inscribed in the relationship between citizenship, authority and truth.

The Romans, the Aztecs, modern empires and contemporary societies, each with its historical singularity, participate in this same outrage. Material greatness falls in love with itself and forgets its ethical centre. At that point, power ceases to impose justice in order to dispense impunity.

History shows the cycle with sobriety: civilisation rises, expands, hardens and declines.

Prophetic fiction does not seek to point out culprits or announce dates; its function is more precise and more demanding: to interrupt the cycle in individual consciousness and, from there, to open the possibility of a transformation in collective consciousness.

Whereas traditional history studies civilisations in terms of an elite group's domination over nations and continents, our sensibilities point towards another definition of what is civilised, in which maturity is accepted in accordance with the capacity for cooperation.

Progress means the capacity to renounce plunder. Greatness means the capacity to organise wellbeing, to distribute justice, to cultivate art, to build stable institutions, to protect the vulnerable, to care for the earth. Peace ceases to be a pause and becomes a summit.

That summit requires a centre: a humanity with technologies capable of transforming the planet needs an ethic capable of guiding technology.

A humanity with weapons capable of erasing cities needs a spirituality capable of disarming the heart. A humanity with networks capable of multiplying rumours needs a culture capable of honouring truth.

Lennon, Luther King and Kierkegaard

Lennon, Luther King and Kierkegaard

Along this line, John Lennon appears as a cultural prophet. His prophecy takes the form of song, because music, to paraphrase Hegel, is the sensible expression of the idea as intuition. A philosophical treatise reaches few; a melody reaches millions. *Imagine* has become a secular psalm, a prayer of utopia, a liturgy of

hope. The song expresses a world in which every human being perceives himself as equal, as important as the other.

Imagine there's heaven

It's easy if you try

Heaven below us

Above us, only heaven

By shifting the emphasis from punishment to shelter, the verse becomes an act of consolation. Lennon summons our humanity, what happens here and now. At the core of the message vibrates an urgency: to live unity in the present, to build concord as daily practice. For this reason his figure became heroic for the conscious generation of the 1960s: he embodied an aspiration to fraternity, social peace, political tenderness and dignity for all.



That aspiration coincides with the proclamation of Jesus Christ: the Kingdom of Heaven as living reality.

The Kingdom appears where love governs.

The Kingdom appears where forgiveness acts as force.

The Kingdom appears where the enemy is transformed into neighbour.

The Kingdom appears where mercy surpasses humiliation.

Lennon calls out to the youth of the world: Why wait?

Why postpone utopia to a nebulous future?

Why delay fraternity, when heaven is also born as conduct?

That impulse opens the path of the poets of today, here on earth.

The poet, conqueror and prophet is to humanity what life is to the animal kingdom: a substance that adopts appropriate nuances to traverse environments, to harmonise tensions, to integrate differences.

The prophetic poet transforms conflict into music, resentment into vision, fracture into bridge. He could be Ulysses, the adventurer imagined by a blind man touching his lyre, a traveller who learns, who returns, who recognises his home with new eyes. He could be Marco Saint-André, who emigrated seven times from his nation in search of a society that respected tolerance and goodness. He could be a contemporary prophet who writes and travels, who teaches and learns, who falls and rises, who sustains his mission across trades and countries.

Lennon's utopia echoes the Kingdom announced by Jesus Christ, but it also gathers the chimeras of so many traditions: a land where men are no longer beasts but lambs, where dignity is protected, where bread suffices, where justice is practised, where the temple becomes the heart.

Lennon cries out to the youth of the world: Why wait?

Why turn the Kingdom into postponement?

Why not give an opportunity to the philosophies that have enabled our most civilised moments?

Why allow good to reconcile with evil through inner transformation, through education, through active mercy?

Why not entrust power to the wise, if not to the most flattering?

A day will come when the philosophies of Confucius, Buddha, Jesus, Muhammad, Krishna, Socrates, More, Bernard Shaw and the one proposed here will join hands and become reality, when humanity breathes as a single lung.

I glimpse that day in several of my dreams: the Muslim brother, the pastor, the wandering Jew, the Catholic, the Hindu guru and the satanic heretic will embrace alongside the heirs of Martin Luther King, celebrating universal coexistence. There will be consensus and recognition, and each will hold his symbol, recognising the dignity of the weakest.

Each will preserve his altar and recognise in the altar of the other the translation of his own. Each honours his path and recognises that the path of the other is also beautiful.

*Imagine there are countries
That have no borders.
It's easy to recreate.
Imagine that everything
Is there to live and thrive,
And believers and atheists respect each other.
The vain, the lustful,
The lazy and the envious
Suffer without anyone pursuing them.*

*Imagine all the people
Living life in peace—
No intrigues, no cruelty,
No prisons or criminals.*

*Imagine that we all are owners
Of everything and we give it freely.
I wonder if you can.
Imagine as much generosity as abundance,
A brotherhood of women and men.
Imagine all the people
Seeing themselves in everyone else.*

This positive rewriting renders the core visible: shared abundance, prosperity as fraternity, possession as responsibility, religion as bridge. For Lennon's call to dismantle those stones once immovable and untouchable constitutes the prerequisite for their transformation and revaluation.

In the same way that Søren Kierkegaard, in *Angreb paa Christendommen* (1854–1855), prescribes the radical rejection of false, socialised and institutionalised faith in order to preserve the possibility of an authentic and personal relationship with Christianity, an analogous operation must be imposed upon the inherited structures of the past. Kierkegaard explicitly refuses to identify himself with a state church in which everyone calls himself Christian without existentially living that demand, and he does so in order to keep the Christian ideal itself intact. In his own words:

“Jeg kalder mig ikke en Christen (idet jeg holder Idealiteten fri), men jeg kan gøre det aabenbart, at de Andre ere det endnu mindre.”
“I do not call myself a Christian (thus keeping the ideal free), but I can make it evident that the others are even less so.”

This negation does not destroy faith; it protects its possibility against historical falsification. Kierkegaard insists that



Christendom has eliminated precisely what constitutes the core of Christianity: offence, scandal, the absolute paradox of the incarnate God, replacing them with comfort, social adaptation and trivial understanding. He formulates it with devastating precision:

“Christendommens Christendom tager Hensyn dertil, og tager Forargelsen, Paradoxet osv. bort fra Christendommen og indfører i Stedet Sandsynlighed, det Umiddelbart Forstaaelige.”
“The Christianity of ‘Christendom’ takes this into account and removes offence, paradox, etc., from Christianity, introducing instead probability, the immediately comprehensible.”

This institutional critique rests upon an existential certainty, formulated early in his *Diaries*: truth — and pre-eminently faith — exists only when it is appropriated inwardly, when it ceases to be passive inheritance and becomes lived decision. Kierkegaard expresses this in one of his most cited and fundamental notes:

“Det, der gjælder, er at finde en Sandhed, som er Sandhed for mig.”

“What matters is to find a truth that is truth for me.”

A faith received through tradition, State or social majority remains external to the individual. Only through rupture, loss and crisis can it become one’s own, that is, alive. The destruction to which Kierkegaard calls is not nihilistic but purifying: it removes falsification in order to allow renewal.

Hence his final diagnosis takes the form of a historical and spiritual maxim:

“Christendommen maa indføres igjen i Christendommen.”
“Christianity must be reintroduced into Christendom.”

In the same way, inherited social structures — erected upon historical inertia, normalised violence and empty consensus — require an equivalent operation. They must be dismantled to reveal the impurities concealed by habit, and only then rebuilt from a genuinely ethical intention. Just as faith becomes true only by being lost and recovered as inner decision, social life is regenerated only when it ceases to reproduce itself mechanically and is reborn from the conscious heart — that is, from the compassionate, understanding heart of good intentions, which renounces intrigue and calculation *ipso facto*.

The logic Kierkegaard imposes is strict and unavoidable: without rupture there is no appropriation; without loss there is no truth; without crisis there is no authenticity. What holds for faith also holds for the human community, as I sing in one of my *Hymns to Jesus*:

*Never stop desiring a just world
Reality is a crust
Left behind by those who once dreamed
You die and leave only your intentions*

We Are Immortal

The metaphysics of our era is continually expressed *via negativa* in horror literature and cinema. My novel *Andes Gótica* and my short-story collection *Confesiones de Difuntos* address themes there such as sin, immortality, consciousness and masochism with a freedom that

today is difficult to articulate in the barren fields of philosophical metaphysics and within the closed circles of theology.

Before I corrected this final chapter of the present book, a hundred corpses appeared in dreams, freshly risen from their graves;

a beautiful woman of about sixty told me that her bones were creaking without her feeling it, and that I must not forget to emphasise that we are all immortal. Her limbs twisted without her altering her smile or her enchanting gaze.

How can one explain heaven and hell to sceptics who, as Jesus explains in the parable of Lazarus and the rich man, might have a resurrected person among them and would still doubt his immortality?

In *The Prosperity of the Duponts*, a story from *Confesiones de Difuntos*, the world beyond appears almost identical to this very world, though with its essential imperfections corrected: hierarchies are reordered, masks dissolve, and justice acquires a living form. Its ending functions as an ethical revelation: those who spoke the truth and oriented their lives towards the wellbeing of others exercise a spiritual kingship there; those who devoted themselves to intrigue, calculation and corruption serve according to ancient codes — not as punishment, but as learning.



To explain it in everyday terms, let us imagine a beggar: someone who barely eats from time to time, who sleeps wherever he can each night, and who is ignored in the streets when he crouches down to ask for coins.

Now then, do you believe that beggar suffers? Or, put differently, does that beggar make *you* suffer?

If your answer is affirmative or negative, it matters little, because you are not the beggar. There lies the decisive spiritual disposition. The beggar can be king of the universe if he regards those who live enslaved by the clock and the wage, by daily bills and the fear of arriving one minute late to their commitments, as the true captives. Outer poverty does not determine inner freedom; it often conceals it.

Yet it is also true that it is free men who decide whether or not they live as slaves to their work. I am often surprised to hear people tell me that I work too much, that I do not enjoy life, simply because I devote almost all my time to writing and making films. I then discover that they themselves live unhappily in occupations that provide them with millionaire salaries. Slavery adopts respectable forms.

That is what Losey embodies in *The Servant* (1963): the servant is the one who, in reality, governs the lives of his masters. Power does not reside where appearances place it, but where dependence is exercised.

In the beyond, appearances dissolve and lies evaporate. There hypocrisy loses all usefulness. The image of kings and servants expresses a pedagogical inversion of destiny: the soul that cultivated service learns the art of governance; the soul that cultivated dominion learns the meaning of service. This is neither vengeance nor arbitrary reward, but a spiritual correspondence between consciousness and the truth that inhabits it.

Destiny is inverted according to the way each consciousness adapted — or resisted adapting — to lived reality. Where the individual persisted in bitterness and in indisposition towards what he was given to live, the seed of his faults, crimes and sins, the beyond intensifies that condition through a greater degradation. That degradation does not operate as external punishment, but as inner consequence: it could be reversed only through a deeper adaptation, that is, through a transformation the soul had already refused to undertake in life.

It is in this sense that Jesus proclaimed that the condemned would have redemption no longer. God's forgiveness extends to all creation in His infinite love; however, whoever falls into sin driven by radical discontent scarcely emerges from it, because his fall is born not of ignorance but of resistance. When Being responds by assigning him a role that intensifies what he rejected — a place that demands service where he sought dominion — discontent sharpens. Condemnation does not consist in the absence of divine love, but in the soul's incapacity to receive it.

Thus the beyond does not introduce a different justice; it carries to its ultimate truth the inner disposition cultivated in life. There each person inhabits, without veils or excuses, the exact form of his own choice.

The Ecumenical Theological Centre (ETC)

The Ecumenical Theological Centre (ETC) appears as a point of convergence.

A global university in which students from all nations receive scholarships on the basis not only of academic excellence but of ethical criteria and tolerance.

Its mission is simple and vast: to gather traditions, to refine their essences, to elevate their affinities, to organise their coexistence.

At the ETC, creeds sit as brothers around a table and recognise a hierarchy: love occupies first place, compassion occupies second place, justice occupies third place, truth occupies fourth place; ritual occupies a pedagogical place, doctrine occupies an interpretative place, cultural identity occupies a precious place as the diversity of the human soul. That hierarchy reduces violence because it renounces doctrinal pride. A mature religion flourishes when it acts as educator of ontology and ethics, for children or adults who may require it.

Our reality will improve on the day when more people in power trust love and goodness, when nations forgive their debts and share their technology with generosity, openness, with a species-wide vision.

That day politics becomes service.

That day the economy becomes stewardship.

That day diplomacy becomes bridge.

That day science becomes blessing.

That day the language of success ceases to be dominion and becomes shared wellbeing.

In *The Prosperity of the Duponts*, as in ancient Greece, the multitudes whom the world judged as condemned appear governed, in paradise, by poets and philosophers. There is a restoration of the original order: where earthly history confused power with dominion, the beyond returns governance to those who knew how to name truth and think the good.

In that realm, history resonates as at its beginning, evoking the Golden Age, that mythical time governed by equity, in which poetic speech and wisdom oriented coexistence. It is an age prior to the corruption of language, when *Homo sapiens* and *Homo neanderthalensis* lived together without yet having coined terms such as “envy”, “murder” or “revenge”, because such realities had not yet demanded names.

Paradise restores what history lost when force displaced the word and cunning displaced thought. With poets and philosophers, justice is no longer imposed from external law, but springs forth as the natural form of reconciled consciousness.

The poet governs because he perceives harmony.

The poet governs because he recognises proportion.

The poet governs because he understands that the good also demands beauty.

Platonic archetypes and Hinduism have already developed and explained the chain of Being.

Consciousness moves by levels, like one ascending through chambers of light.

It is metaphysics; others call it theology; others call it vision; others call it dream.

In our time, many read with interest that quantum physics contemplates the possibility of multiverses. Metaphysical imagination returns through the door of science, and science becomes the inadvertent ally of ancient intuition: reality contains more than the visible.

At the ETC, the same humanity that imagines wormholes and multiple universes is capable of envisioning a common ethic.

What is required is a humanity that recognises the force and power of the heart, that conceives compassion as the source of all

energy, that builds algorithms that also identify the most honest and spiritual beings of each generation, without regard to the belief or religion that formed them.

For that, it is necessary that all creeds coexist, and they will do so according to three universal laws.

Three Universal Laws for the Harmony of Religions

It is time for religions to recognise themselves as educators of ontology and ethics for children or adults who may require it. A theology for the coexistence of all creeds must be grounded in the three religious laws I have presented, inspired by Isaac Asimov's three laws of robotics, in a chapter of my philosophical treatise: *Being God, Global Metaphysics* (2023).

First Religious Law: A believer will do good to every human being, will allow every human being to prosper, and will do everything within his reach to alleviate the suffering of others according to the precepts of love and compassion inherent in his faith.

Second Religious Law: A believer will cultivate harmony with nature and with the living beings that inhabit it, of the animal and plant kingdoms, unless doing so results in an action contrary to the First Religious Law.

Third Religious Law: A believer will obey the teachings and commandments of his sacred books, and the precepts imparted by the leaders of his faith, unless following them results in an action contrary to the First and Second Religious Laws.

By choosing universal and sacred truths from diverse religions, the just and charitable person is elevated above formalism.

The ordering of the three laws, in which the life of the individual man or woman is supreme, accords with the current postulate of nature, in which each human being loves freely, and each believes in something or someone by vocation.

Yet that supremacy is conditioned by respect for all the other creatures the gods have placed at their disposal, as well as by the respectful management of the resources of Mother Earth.

These laws offer a shared skeleton. Each religion adds its symbolic skin, its music, its calendars, its stories, its parables, its saints, its sages, its styles of prayer. The first law places the human

being at the centre of ethics. The second law places the earth at the centre of care. The third law places tradition at the pedagogical centre, under the primacy of compassion and harmony.

Secular maturity has already been based on the universal acceptance of the Charter of Human Rights, which includes ideologies underlying religions, and also includes the civic language that enables fraternity and coexistence.

Theological Ecumenic Global Centre (Global Ecumenical Theology – Centre)

When religions are accepted as sisters, and also as daughters of God, the creation of the Theological Ecumenic Global Centre (Global Ecumenical Theology – Centre) (TEG-C) will be viable. The TEG-C will gather ambassadors of the major religions, together with their subregional varieties, in a congress of theology and religion to be held every four years, in various capitals of the world.

That four-year periodicity creates a rite of concord. Its itinerancy through diverse capitals creates geopolitical humility. The presence of subregional varieties creates respect for the internal cultures of each faith. The congress becomes a moral tribunal of violence, and becomes a laboratory of common vocabulary. Two planes are distinguished there: the plane of symbol, which varies; the plane of the good, which converges. A delicate science is learned there: translating without betraying, uniting without imposing, recognising without diluting.

Harmony among all beliefs becomes, in the twenty-first century, a practical possibility. The world of the twenty-first century is a spiral that contains all religious manifestations, all stages of understanding of God: from idolatry and dogma to compassion and coexistence; from ritual fervour to living ethics; from mystical seeking to the serenity of the sage; from secular questioning to inward reverence.

Atheism itself can function as a neutral belief in the sense of an ethic based on human dignity. Within that spiral there is room for conversions and spiritual quests, room for returns and maturations, room for purifications of faith.

We live in an era of formerly unattainable knowledge, with access to great works by theologians, philosophers, poets and novelists, with the entire legacy of theatre and cinema at our disposal.

The law is available to all, medicine to whoever seeks it, sacred texts to every person. That availability turns coexistence into a duty. Duty is born of a fact: every life has value.

Every creature shares the earth.

Every culture sustains a fragment of beauty.

Every tradition guards a moral treasure.

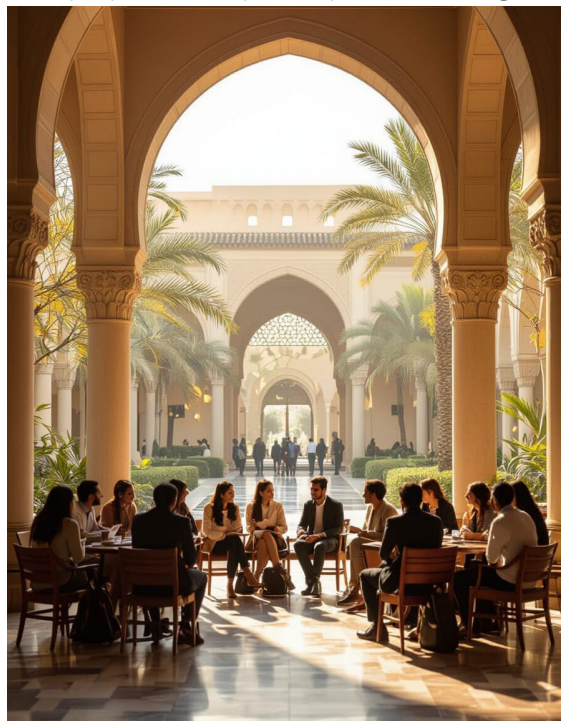
Within that richness, common consensus becomes a spiritual task and a political task.

At this point, gentleness overcomes violence as a principle of high wisdom. Tai Chi, a peaceful martial art, teaches that aggression can be tamed by harmony, by balance, by fluidity. Brutal force grows tired; intelligent softness

perseveres. That lesson becomes living history in Mahatma Gandhi.

Gandhi embodied the power of gentleness and peaceful resistance as a path towards freedom and justice. His life showed that the steadfast soul transforms the oppressor, because it exposes his violence before the mirror of the world and before his own conscience.

The Salt March embodies that philosophy. Gandhi led a march against the British colonial monopoly on salt. That act mobilised thousands and revealed a moral strategy: to turn an everyday gesture into a symbol of dignity. Salt, a common substance, became a civil



sacrament. The march became a liturgy of liberation. Peaceful resistance became a superior force. His legacy continues to inspire pacifist movements and defenders of human rights. In the context of the ETC, Gandhi occupies the place of a secular saint: a teacher of harmony.

The Qur'an's message of universal coexistence offers another supporting pillar.

A community of believers flourishes when each member believes in what he practises and expresses in his rituals. Harmony grows when faith is lived as a choice of the heart and as service to one's neighbour.

In Sura 5 of the Qur'an one reads — purified of footnotes that distort it — as a blessing that embraces breadth: believers, Jews, Sabians and Christians, those who believe in Allah and in the Last Day and do good, will have peace and happiness.

Those verses grant Islam's blessing to every honest man or woman who has certainty of a universal God beyond labels.

The Qur'an, a book dictated by the Archangel Saint Gabriel to Muhammad, contains a vision of spiritual kinship. The philosophies of all nations find their common ground in preaching peace, peaceful coexistence and respect for others.

Proverbs from across the world celebrate persuasion over the sword, patience over fury, friendship over revenge.

The Triumph of Goodness

The prevailing reason and the critical Kantian discourse have enthroned science and productivity as the summit of Being, that is, of human experience. Science is human glory; it is also an instrument. The instrument becomes a tyrant when it occupies the throne. Productivity becomes an idol when it decides a person's value. The market becomes a religion when it dictates salvation.

Prophetic fiction intervenes to restore the centre: the good. Human life, with its fragility, with its beauty, with its mystery, requires a faith that sustains it.

That this generation lives in the uncertainty of being struck by earthquakes or floods becomes a call to humility. It is time to trust in chance, which the ancient Romans called *fortuna*, and which believers call God.

Fortuna, in its primordial sense, is providence that manifests in turns, in coincidences, in destinies.

The care of the earth against snowstorms, floods, asteroids and nuclear wars is God's affair; the human being participates through ethics, through daily care, through the building of peace, through science oriented towards the good.

Humanity awakens its ecological conscience upon discovering the noble character of animals and plants.

And the universe will calm its elements on the day humanity discovers that goodness re-blooms in hearts and meanness dissolves into generosity.

Artificial Intelligence is taking shape as a new Arcadia, in a universe in which humans will be able to devote ourselves to sport, love and the human sciences: literature, theatre, poetry, painting, sculpture, music, architecture, philosophy and theology, the understanding of our divine being.

AI will be able to denounce those who lie and conspire, and to elevate the honest man or woman, those who work for the common wellbeing. In this vision, technology becomes an ally of ethics when it aligns itself with transparency and compassion.

A question arises before the cards of science, marked by falsifiability, and those — often summarily — discredited of religion, metaphysics and literature:

What should we believe in: science or fiction?

In my revelations, that boundary becomes porous. Inner experience embraces human knowledge as a whole, and the division between metaphysics, the natural sciences and the social sciences proves more methodological than ontological. Destiny offers masks, and we must pass through them with coherence in order to reach not an abstract truth, but a lived certainty.

Truth, according to Hegel, does not exist as a fixed entity external to the subject, but as truth realised in consciousness, as a *Gewißheit* that unfolds historically. A truth that has not been appropriated by consciousness remains empty; it becomes effective only when spirit recognises it as its own in the process of its becoming.

Once, when asked which was the best thesis concerning the creation of the world, I replied:

“There is the scientific hypothesis of the Big Bang, but there is also the account of Genesis, in which God creates the world in seven days; a myth that can be read in consonance both with the Big Bang and with the great ages of evolution.”

“It is a matter,” I added, “of the wise deciding which of these formulations responds better to the metaphysical question posed.”

Personally, I incline towards the account of Genesis, not as a literal description of cosmic processes, but because it offers answers accessible to the childlike spirit from its earliest awakenings. Have we forgotten that it was as children that we wished to find an answer to everything, when the question of origin, good, evil and meaning presented itself with greatest intensity? It was precisely the myths of literature — and, in an eminent way, those of the Bible — that gave initial form to those concerns, organising them before abstract thought could do so.

The adult world, by contrast, has become accustomed to delegating such questions to astronomers and physicists, as though the rigour of calculation sufficed to satisfy the need for meaning. It thus forgets



that the question itself is not scientific but metaphysical: science describes how processes occur, but not why being exists nor why that existence claims meaning. Myth, by contrast, does not compete with science; it prepares the soul for it, offering an original language in

which the question can be born without being suffocated by technique.

In that way, Genesis does not close inquiry; it inaugurates wonder. It teaches one to ask before it teaches one to explain, and for that reason it retains a pedagogical validity that no hypothesis, however exact, can replace.

Here Husserl's phenomenology offers a decisive clarification. Husserl shows that all knowledge, even scientific knowledge, is founded upon a prior experience of the world as it is given to consciousness. Before every theory stands the *Lebenswelt*, the lifeworld, the original horizon in which things appear with meaning. The phenomenological reduction suspends automatic explanations in order to return to that origin where meaning is constituted.

Thus science and fiction do not exclude one another: they operate in different registers of the same field of experience. Science formulates laws and regularities; metaphysics interrogates the foundation; fiction and myth symbolically articulate what cannot yet be said in any other way. All emerge from the same consciousness seeking orientation in the world.

The question of origin, meaning and destiny changes its language, but it never abandons its metaphysical character.

I, Petrus Romanus

Like Hamlet, like Don Quixote, I have survived as an actor, poet and university lecturer in Portugal and the United States, as well as a carpenter's assistant and an assistant in a spirits distillery in France, or as a shopkeeper of haute couture clothing in London. I have had the privilege of telling the world the truth, always under the shelter of the shifting role that destiny allots me: the forthright man from Santander in Bogotá, the passionate Latino in the United States, the Colombian academic in Porto, the American filmmaker in India.

Each role offers an angle of humanity.

Each trade offers humility.

Each city offers a mirror.

Each language offers a window.

In 2020 these texts were set aside out of respect for the dominant discourse of the media. How does one write about a mystical experience in the twenty-first century, under the world's

ironic gaze? Like Young, I strove to apply the gag of the Enlightenment to my paranormal experiences.

I thought of publishing this book after my death, and even so visions and events that changed my destiny and fed my imagination led me to revise it.

I have rewritten and corrected it several times; at first it was presented as fiction, and the attacks I survived persuaded me to follow the voice of God within me, which indicated that I ought to relate it with honesty and sincerity, as testimony to the protection He grants to the one He anoints as prophet.

Since, as I have already mentioned, I found this text altered in 2022, I devoted an entire week of vigil to purging it of falsehoods, adding new episodes.

It was dawning on Tuesday as I was writing the causes of my belated intervention to stop the terrorist attacks against the USA, when I heard clearly a female voice that said:

"And was it only for that that the fall of the Twin Towers occurred?"

That gift I already mentioned in my episode at the Abbey of Saint Vincent, that of hearing what others gossip about me elsewhere in the world, was revealing what I had been denouncing: that spies had tampered with my computers and were aware of what I said and wrote.

"So they are spying on me?" I asked, looking into the camera of my Mac.

"But he is a demon!" they exclaimed, astonished, on the other side of the world.

"No!" I replied, ceasing to be myself in order to become a mere spokesman for the Creator, who, with sudden wrath, roared: "I am Shiva!"

A reverential calm prevailed, and from then on I never again heard the gossip of my spies, who, as I have already mentioned, grew accustomed to respecting me, being, in fact, the first readers of my message.

That episode also showed me, moreover, that those spying on me were not Americans, nor English, but Hindus, just as I saw clearly in my visions. The Christians, intimidated or fearful of my manifestations, had entrusted to the Hindus the understanding and surveillance of the visionary who had arisen in their nation.

I, Petrus Romanus_____

Art Reconciles Opposites

My message is expressed in art, because art too is the sensible manifestation of spirit. As I express it in *Being God*:

The summit of that current of sensitivity and thought is sung by Schiller in his poem “An die Freude” (“To Joy”):

*Joy, beautiful spark of the gods,
Daughter of Elysium,
We enter, drunk with fire,
Your heavenly sanctuary!*

Yet it is not poetry, but music that is the muse closest to God, the most refined and transcendental sensible manifestation, according to Schelling, Fichte and Schopenhauer; the language of God that astronomers hear with delight in the harmonious organisation of the stars and constellations, the unequivocal demonstration of His existence already manifest in Bach’s work, according to Emil Cioran.

Beethoven perceives the sensible value of Schiller’s poem and immortalises it in his Ninth Symphony.

*O sublime composer!
Singing of the existence of God
with no other argument than the fraternal love
that His omnipresence inspires in us,
a bridge between Hegelian Enlightenment
and the medieval ideals
of universal concord.*

It was a night in November 1994
when, without having studied in depth
the structure of your symphony,
in a dream the marvels
of your great work were revealed to me.

I perceived in it
two antagonistic musical themes

_____Hugo Noël Santander Ferreira

that began a struggle
symphonically irreconcilable.

Then a chord, initially timid,
intervened to tame one of the melodies
and to challenge the second, demonstrating
its capacity to encompass it and destroy it.

And when confrontation was already imminent
and the first melody overpowered the second,
forcing it to its knees
as it awaited its deserved punishment,
the elder sister sang
that a universe under a single Creator God
breathes only love.

And both melodies were reconciled
in a chorus of universal bliss!

*Your spells bind together anew
What fashion, with severity, divides
All men become brothers
Where your gentle wing abides
Embrace, you millions!
This kiss is for the whole world!
Brothers, above the starry canopy
There must dwell a loving Father*

Fashion divides; pride separates. Dogma hardens; propaganda sets people against one another; but joy binds together anew. Joy, understood as a divine spark, produces fraternity. And fraternity acts as a criterion of spiritual truth.

A religion that produces fraternity aligns with God.

An ideology that produces fraternity aligns with the light.

A politics that produces fraternity aligns with the future.

In art the multitude recognises itself as a single humanity, and the individual feels, for moments, that his border becomes porous. It is not just any collective emotion, but a suspension of isolation. Consciousness perceives — as if it were remembering — that the

world is not composed of closed entities, but of expressions of a profound unity.

Arthur Schopenhauer gave a philosophical name to that experience. For him, true art breaks the spell of the principle of individuation: the subject ceases to live shut up within his self and opens to an immediate intuition of unity. Art deactivates, if only for an instant, the illusion of absolute separation; and when the principle of individuation withdraws, what appears is not emptiness, but the evidence of one and the same shared essence. Beauty is not decoration: it is revelation. The climax of a tragedy, the ending of a film, the shudder of a symphony or the clean blow of a verse awaken in us the certainty that we are more than an isolated body defending its biography.

That experience prepares the ground for the ETC: a spirituality founded not on belonging to a label, but on recognition of the common Being. The unity that music lets one feel as intuition, the ETC turns into conscious pedagogy: not to abolish differences, but to subordinate them to what is essential. In art, Being is announced; in spiritual life, one learns to inhabit it.

The ETC, a Religion of Being

The International Ecumenical Centre leaves behind the *being-there* of religions — that is, the contingent fact of being born into a culture that hands us a religion already given, with its language, its symbols and its rites, as an initial mediation of access to the divine — in order to focus on Being: on the eternal and immediate relationship of our Being with universal Being, whether this is called God, Allah, Life, creative Nothingness, or the Mystery that sustains all that exists.

This shift does not deny historical religions; it de-absolutises them. It recognises them as temporal forms of the manifestation of Being, not as its exclusive property. Where religious *being-there* fixes identities, borders and belongings, Being opens continuity, recognition and communion. In this way, religions are understood as historical garments: necessary as a threshold, insufficient as a destiny. What matters is not the emblem, but the living relationship with that to which the emblem points.

For this reason, the ETC sees one's neighbour as an expression of the same essence of Being that it venerates, beyond the

sociocultural, biological or spatial-temporal accident in which that neighbour is inscribed. The other ceases to be a representative of a doctrine, a nation or an ideological identity, and is revealed as the presence of the same ontological ground. Fraternity ceases to be a command and becomes a recognition: if Being is one, the other is not a stranger, but a different way in which the same Being appears.

The teachers of the ETC teach one to see the believer of another creed as a brother, not only out of moral tolerance, but principally out of essential identity. They also teach one to recognise nature as the living home and the sensible body of Being, not as an object of exploitation nor as a reserve of resources, but as a continuous manifestation of a life that expresses itself in multiple forms. One who contemplates nature in this way does not idolise it: he recognises it. And one who recognises it moderates his hand, purifies his desire and learns to inhabit the world instead of plundering it.

Eternity, so understood, is not a future promise nor a post-mortem consolation: it is our present essence, and this certainty is inscribed silently yet rigorously in the Spanish language itself.

To Be Immortal and to Be There in the Mortal

Before the modern metaphysics of anguish, Socrates had already faced the problem of death with a serenity that reveals a finer understanding of Being than is usually attributed to ancient philosophy. Condemned to death, he declares that no one knows what death is, but that it can only be one of two things: either a dream without dreams — an absolute non-being, like a deep night in which nothing is lost because nothing is felt — or a transfer of the soul to another place where it would meet the great sages and heroes of the past. In both cases, Socrates concludes, death is not an evil.

“No evil can reach a good man, neither in life nor after death.”

The greatness of this stance lies not in doctrine, but in its moral and ontological structure: Socrates does not need to declare death an abyss and then save himself from it. He offers no lifebuoy because he declares no shipwreck. He looks death in the face without fear because he knows that the good of the soul — inner justice, the search for truth — does not depend on the duration of the body. This serenity is a perfect gateway to the distinction that Spanish will preserve with precision: Being is not reduced to being-there.

Each person lives the intimate and universal trial of his immortality: his consciousness lives itself as permanence. This is not an acquired reasoning, but an experience that accompanies everyone: the fact of feeling identical to oneself through mutation.

Every human being possesses the lived experience of continuous presence. Each recognises himself as identical through ages, through changes of the body, through moves, losses, victories, learnings. The sense of “I” acts as a constant witness. Memory, when it retreats into childhood, finds continuity. Imagination, when it tries to represent an absolute origin of that continuity, finds a horizon that the soul perceives as familiarity: a sensation of having always been presence.

The *Bhagavad Gita* illuminates that intuition: the soul partakes of eternity; if you live you gain the world, if you die you gain heaven. That sentence does not reduce itself to reward or punishment; it names the ontological asymmetry between essence and circumstance: life affects the mode of being-there, not the ground of Being.

In his *Meditations*, Descartes recognised the force of that continuity: the self remains the same from childhood to old age, in its core of consciousness. That permanence functions as ontological evidence. Life moves in time, and consciousness experiences itself as a present that contains past and future, a present that renews itself



and yet preserves identity. It is not only that we remember: it is that we recognise ourselves. And that recognition is given as immediate certainty.

Some observe deteriorations of the mind and think of the fragility of the self. In reality the mind acts as an instrument of the soul, and the instrument can fail, in the same way that a radio loses signal. In altered states — through destructive substances such as fentanyl, or through syndromes that affect memory and language — communication with the world is modified, and the core of consciousness withdraws into its interior.

The soul takes refuge in itself, in its thoughts, in its own chamber of being. The person, speaking from that place, often expresses serenity, a sense of being well, or an awareness of communicative limits. Essence sustains inner dominion: Being remains, even if being-there shows cracks. The vehicle changes, not the driver; the mirror clouds, not the light.

The strongest proof of immortality is the lived permanence of being, the continuity of consciousness that transcends time and space, the experience of an eternal present. Our essence remains immutable while circumstances change. This is what mystics have always known: eternal beings living a temporal experience.

The manifestation of Being is the infinite; the manifestation of being-there is the finite. The finite occurs within the infinite.

Spanish as Evidence: To Be and To Be There

It is often quoted that Victor Hugo called Spanish the language for speaking with God, yet the cause of that statement has not been investigated. Beyond the literary summits of its Golden Age, Castilian preserves a decisive ontological distinction: it clearly separates **Being** from **being there**. This is not a grammatical subtlety, but a structural difference that makes it possible to think — and to live — the relation between the eternal and the transient.

Castilian does not invent this split: it recognises it and makes it audible in everyday use. Where other languages confuse identity and situation under a single verb, Spanish distinguishes between what we are in an essential sense and what we are simply being, at a given moment. In that distinction, the speaker has an ontological tool: he

can name identity without chaining it to circumstance, and he can describe circumstance without turning it into essence.

The affirmation, “I am in eternity, but I am in the world”, expresses the core of a fundamental metaphysical conflict: the tension between immutable essence and contingent existence, between what remains and what changes, between deep identity and circumstance. Being is not exhausted by any of its manifestations; being there does not constitute the totality of what we are.

Long before modern philosophy thematised this tension, Spanish had preserved it as living experience. Martin Heidegger will systematise it in *Being and Time* through his distinction between *Sein* and *Dasein*, but it is worth underlining the order of precedence: language safeguards the intuition; philosophy formalises it. Heidegger does not discover something new; he renders thinkable what the speaker already lives without theorising it.

Human time — past, present and future — affects us profoundly. Yet only the present acts as the threshold of living experience, as the door through which Being lets itself be experienced within being there. The present is not merely one more chronological point: it is the place where eternity touches temporality without dissolving into it.

Heidegger described this temporal structure as constitutive of *Dasein*: the human being is always projected towards the future, burdened with the past, and occupied in the present. But whereas Heidegger interprets this present as the domain of care (*Sorge*), here the present appears as an ontological space of contact: the point where eternal Being manifests in concrete mortality.

Being is ontologically prior and posterior to being there. It does not begin with the body nor does it end with it. Being there, by contrast, is inseparably bound to the body, to space, to biography and to finite time. This difference is not hierarchical in a moral sense, but structural: being there is the necessary stage of experience; Being is its invisible continuity.

Heidegger’s *Dasein* — literally “being-there” — can be understood precisely through this distinction. It corresponds to being there: to the manner in which Being appears as situated, embodied, historical. It does not define what we are in essence, but how we are being in the world. *Dasein* does not possess a world: it is world. In the

same way, one who is there cannot be separated from his climate, his language, his body, his vital moment.

Here Heidegger’s notion of *Geworfenheit* (thrownness) appears: the fact of finding ourselves always already in an unchosen situation. That is exactly being there: we do not choose the point of departure; we appear in the midst of a scene already begun. Yet that scene does not exhaust what we are.

The distinction between Being and being there corrects, from language itself, a classic error of metaphysics: confusing Being with beings, reducing identity to its visible manifestations. Being names that which remains identical to itself through all changes; being there names the changing mode in which that identity is expressed and put to the test.

For that reason we can say: I am Hugo, I am Colombian, I am French — affirmations of essential identity — but I am in Bucaramanga and I am working at a university — transient conditions of being there. To confuse these two planes is to reduce the human being to his function, his location, or his momentary usefulness.

This distinction is not only linguistic: it opens a genuine spiritual pedagogy. Being there is changeable: it passes through cities, professions, climates, social roles, masks. Being, by contrast, remains



identical to itself and grants continuity, meaning and coherence to the entire vital journey.

Here the decisive difference with Heidegger emerges. He defines the authenticity of *Dasein* as *Sein-zum-Tode* (being-towards-death): finitude as the ultimate horizon that compels one to appropriate existence. This ontology formulates something different: being there is being-towards-death; Being is being-towards-eternity. Death affects being there — the body, the role, the situation — but it does not exhaust Being. We are there in mortality, but we are not reducible to it. Where Heidegger sees the absolute limit, here a veil is recognised.

When a society classifies human beings according to money, rank, surname or power, it reduces the individual to his fleeting being there and forgets the inalienable dignity of Being. When, by contrast, a society values persons for their capacity to feel, for their compassion and for their aptitude to love, it recognises the eternal dimension of each one and recovers — even if only partially — paradise on earth. Heidegger would have called the former *das Man*, inauthentic existence; here it is recognised as an absolutisation of being there.

Being there moves Being from one infinity to another infinity; Being longs to rest in an infinity of plenitude. That dynamic explains desire, nostalgia, seeking, ascent, prayer, art, philosophy. It explains the prophetic impulse: the prophet perceives the infinite and translates it into the language of being there in order to raise others.

For that reason death is understood as a transition of being there, while Being remains eternal and immutable. Prophetic fiction prepares that transition by training consciousness in meaning. One who lives the world as pure accident despairs; one who lives the world as a narrative oriented by good recognises signs, learns, forgives, builds.

Becoming Aware of Our Immortality

Heidegger's presupposition that we all live evasively in the face of death collapses before Socrates and before any religious tradition that reflects continually on finitude. The Greek philosopher does not conceal death: he contemplates it with irony and courage, and turns it into a proof of authentic life. He does not need anguish in order to be faithful to himself; the consciousness that what is essential — the

search for truth, the justice of the soul — transcends, or at least is not affected by, the end of bodily being there, is enough for him.

The Castilian distinction between Being and being there recovers Socratic serenity with even greater clarity: we do not need to decide whether death is nothingness or immortality, because we already know that it affects only being there. We are in eternity even if we are in the world.

Consciousness, therefore, is lived as permanence. Each human being recognises himself as identical through ages, through changes of the body (ageing, illness, incapacity), through losses, moves and learning. The sense of “I” acts as a constant witness. Memory, when it retreats into childhood, finds continuity. Imagination, when it tries to represent an absolute origin of that continuity, finds a horizon that the soul recognises as familiarity: the sensation of having always been presence, of being Being.

That permanence is no longer a religious dogma nor an experimentally demonstrated inference: it is the very way in which Being bears witness to itself in us. Even when being there fragments, something remains as a silent centre.

The ETC is founded on this evidence: immortality is belief, yet it is demonstrated and recognised as experience.

Prophecy Is Poetry

Prophecy presented as poetic inspiration then becomes a school of Being. Its essence is dialectic, and it renounces dogma. Arthur Schopenhauer noted this in *Parerga und Paralipomena*: philosophy is born condemned in advance as doctrinal imposition. Every philosopher aspires to refute his predecessors and impose himself as absolute king of the *logos*. His philosophy, therefore, begins by defending its position from the outset. Philosophical labour thus degenerates into refutation, into polemic, into an exercise of conceptual power, more concerned with defeating the adversary than with illuminating experience.

Schopenhauer denounces, with pessimism, this limitation of philosophy, and, contrary to Plato, views poets with envy and admiration, for they do not pretend to impose their accounts over their predecessors, but rather to enrich the spectrum of existence

itself with their visions of a reality that becomes more complex through their narratives.

Nietzsche understood his master, and for that reason he elaborated his philosophy as a denunciation of the propensity of philosophical systems to absolutise concepts, to confuse intellectual constructions with reality itself, and to demand adhesion instead of awakening understanding.

But Schopenhauer himself already distrusted total systems and granted art — and in particular poetry and music — a superior cognitive dignity. Art does not impose itself: it apprehends reality and moves. It does not compel belief: it expresses and lets one see. It does not enclose truth in formulae: it lets truth happen as experience.

In this same vein, poetic prophecy encompasses philosophy, yet surpasses it where the concept becomes tyrannical; its parables, its myths, its narratives set it free. Plato himself, who banished poets from his ideal Republic, was a poet, as Diogenes Laertius tells us, and the proof of this is there, in two poems that surpass Socratic maieutics: the myth of Plato's cave and the myth of the winged chariot.

Where the system closes, the symbol opens. In fact, poetry does not aspire to demonstrate Being: it presupposes it and makes it sensible by moving us. It is the very poetic experience that teaches the reader to see himself as permanent Being, to experience eternity without resorting to argumentative theses.

The reader of a poem seeks something he does not yet know what it is, as Octavio Paz points out, and is transformed by that encounter.

This pedagogy of Being has a decisive ethical consequence: it makes it possible to recognise one's neighbour beyond his metaphysical adherence. Both to the one who recognises himself as immortal and to the one who rejects all explicit transcendence, poetry reveals something prior to all belief: his consubstantiality with other human beings.

Even one who denies eternity participates, without knowing it, in the same experience of unity when he is touched by a true work. Being imposes itself without imposing itself.

For that reason, in art, we are all one. At the climax of a tragedy, when the hero falls and the spectator recognises himself in his destiny; at the ending of a film, when another life becomes intimate;

in the shudder of a symphony, when time seems to be suspended; in the verses of a poet, when another's word names what we never knew how to say: the principle of individuation dissolves. There is no longer an I before another, but a single shared experience. That unity is not ideological nor moral: it is ontological.

History is venerated here as living pedagogy. Not as an accumulation of data, but as a narrative in which Being has been sought, has been lost, and has been intuited again and again. Tragedy and drama function as mirrors in which the human being contemplates his *hybris* and his fall; comedy, as a lesson in humility that disarms the ego and restores proportion; horror, as the extreme expression of the derangement of those who, by ignoring Being, remain prisoners of fear, isolation and inner violence.

The prophet does not need to master truth; he lets himself be traversed by it, to the point of embodying the words of Jesus Christ: I am the truth. His life itself is the rejection of the doctrinaire, of the multitudes who clamour for unity, of fame, of money, of power, of fashionable idols, of fashion itself.

Only thus does he return the human being to the primordial experience of being original, of building his own life, his own history, his own myth, of building God, of becoming God.

That progress is a teaching that requires masters, and a university: the ETC.

There every religion is accepted as a path towards the same end, as coexistence. There every dogma or creed is rejected if it violates the three universal laws for the coexistence of religions.

Such is the prophetic purpose of fiction: to take raw life and transmute it into living teaching, to make teaching a river of love that flows without dams, to weave with that love light institutions, to make them centres of responsible, dancing freedom, and to raise coexistence until heaven descends and becomes earth inhabited by free men.

From the Judgement of the Suicides

—Tell the world how you will judge us —the suicides asked me on the eve of the publication of this book.

And I asked Jesus:

—By what criterion shall we judge the suicides?

—And He answered in my heart:

—The world, resting upon a hardened tradition and often devoid of mercy or understanding, maintains that the suicide deserves punishment for having rejected the gift of life entrusted to him by God. That judgement springs more from fear than from truth, more from custom than from discernment. For suicide is also a possibility granted to man by God: a tragic exit that reveals, in a painful and paradoxical manner, His infinite love for the human creature. All of us, like prodigal sons—as Böhme reminds us—choose at some point to turn away from Him in order to exercise freedom, that terrible and sublime gift which has been granted to no other creature with consciousness and discernment.

Regardless of the acts and intentions each human being may have unfolded throughout life, suicide occurs precisely because this world does not yet reflect the fullness of the Kingdom of Heaven. While that fullness remains unmanifest, human freedom is exposed to vertigo. Some of the guilty resort to suicide driven by the weight of their own wickedness, hurling themselves into the flames, headfirst, amid the gnashing of teeth already announced in the Gospel. But there are others who carry it out as a last resort in order to avoid sin, as Abbas Kiarostami shows in his film *Taste of Cherry* (1997).

If the earth were just, if men lived in righteousness, if rulers governed in fear of God and not as plunderers of the public treasury, if there were no intrigues, murders, thefts or the pillaging of one's neighbour disguised as discourses of necessity, then yes: then suicide would be an unjustifiable ingratitude. In a world ordered by justice, life would be a luminous and bearable gift. But this world has been deformed by the idolatry of power, money, and fame.

The rulers of today—many of them—have turned authority into spoils. They reward themselves with false titles, manipulate elections, pact with criminals, uphold their thrones upon lies and blood, and call corruption “governability”. These men have made the world a morally uninhabitable place. They have prepared the table of sin and served it with cynicism, demanding that the righteous either eat or die.

For it is easy—far too easy—for an honest man to decide one day to abandon righteousness: to lie, to intrigue, to ally himself with

bandits who plunder the weak, to join criminal organisations, to become cruel, cunning, and ruthless, even more perverse than their leaders, until he comes to rule them. The world rewards that choice, applauds it, and crowns it.

But whoever refuses that temptation, whoever refuses to sell his soul in order to survive, whoever discovers that there is no longer an honest path by which to live without betraying the law of God, and even so does not cross that frontier but withdraws from life rather than surrender to evil, that one is not condemned. He belongs among the blessed poor in spirit who could not endure the density of collective sin.

They understood, with sorrow, that it is preferable to lose life itself and enter the Kingdom of Heaven with the soul intact than to condemn oneself to wickedness and suffering, for wickedness is suffering and suffering is wickedness.

My judgement shall not be according to the judgement of the world. I shall not measure with the rod of hypocrites, nor shall I repeat the sentence of those who tolerate crime when it disguises itself as power. The world judges by appearances and traditions; I shall judge by hearts. And if the world absolves executioners and condemns victims, I shall separate purity from suffering. Many who are today labelled reprobates shall find rest, while many who govern today and are acclaimed by multitudes of sinners shall be called to account for every soul they pushed to the edge of the abyss.

A few months ago I dreamt that I was ascending with great difficulty up a staircase that led to an important place; walking was arduous, I felt the body tired, I feared that my knees would respond to the effort demanded by climbing steep steps.

I was clinging to a handrail, dragging the body with the strength of my arms, and then a man came down by the same handrail, forcing me to let go of it.

I saw his face clearly, and he wore the white papal habit.

Without stepping back, I resorted to the strength of my legs, and to my surprise I noticed that, although they trembled, they drove me from one step to the next.

I knew that I would soon reach the summit.

*I, Petrus Romanus*_____

For who can stop a prophet anointed by God?



Proof